The Progress of Canada's Children 2001

Highlights

Canadian Council on Social Development

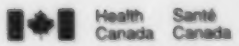
The Progress of Canada's Children 2001 is the fifth in a series of annual reports from the Canadian Council on Social Development monitoring the well-being of children, youth, and families.

This 72-page report presents a wealth of data and information about children and youth, organized into two main sections. The first section assesses important inputs into child and youth well-being such as economic security, physical safety, and community resources. The second section reviews how children and youth are faring by assessing outcomes such as learning achievements, health status, and youth employment.

The long-term goal of *The Progress of Canada's Children* is to measure changes in children's well-being from year to year. This year's report focuses particular attention on school-aged children using information from a wide variety of studies and data sources.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is one of Canada's leading research organizations. It is an independent, national, non-profit organization focusing on issues of social and economic security.

Major funding for this project was provided by the **Laidlaw Foundation**, with additional support from **Health Canada**, the **National Crime Prevention Centre**, and **TD Securities**.



TD Securities

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Portrait of Children and Youth

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One in eight school-aged children lives in a family with very low average income — below $20,000 per year.

Most school-aged children have mothers who work outside the home. Nearly 80% of women with school-aged children were in the labour force in 1999. Over the last two decades, this figure jumped by 42%, with most of the increase occurring in the 1980s.

Enrollment in private schools is rising. While the number of students in public schools rose by 0.5% between 1993/94 and 1997/98, the number in private schools rose by 8.6%.

Growing Up in Canada

Family Life

62% of parents worry whether they are raising their children properly. 63% of Canadians surveyed (parents and non-parents) also worry whether parents in general know what they are doing in raising children.

Parents are spending more time on paid and unpaid work. Between 1992 and 1998, married parents aged 25 to 44 who were employed full-time increased their paid work activities by two hours per week. Over the same period, their unpaid work hours also increased, from 33.6 hours to 34.3 hours per week for women (up 2%), and from 22.4 hours to 23.1 hours per week for men (up 3%).

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Most families are more stressed and less satisfied. About two-thirds of full-time employed parents with children are dissatisfied with the balance between their job and home life. 26% of married fathers, 38% of married mothers and 38% of single mothers report severe time stress.

Economic Security

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In 1999, 32% of single parents felt that their income was not adequate to meet their family's basic needs – compared to 13% of couples with children.

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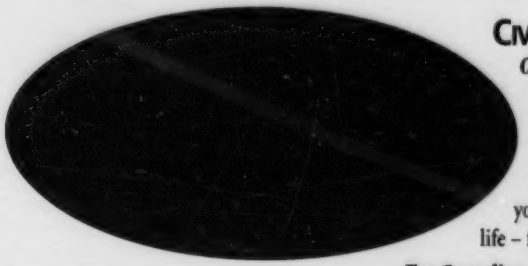

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The gender gap is closing. In 1999, the employment rate for girls was slightly higher than for boys. Girls are more likely than boys to hold a job during the school year (36% compared to 32%), and they are just as likely to find a summer job (49% compared to 50%).

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A modest level of paid work is associated with better school performance, a lower drop-out rate and broader social participation. Working more than 15 to 20 hours per week, however, can have negative effects on school performance.

Policy Initiatives for Children and Youth

The "targeted" approach of governments has resulted in a patchwork of public policies for school-aged children. The general trend away from universality, with emphasis on targeting the early years, adolescence, and youth at risk, has left "holes" in the public policy quilt.

Only two provinces – Québec and British Columbia – have created publicly funded child care systems open to all families – rich, poor, and the large majority in between.

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), a federal/provincial/territorial agreement signed on September 11, 2000, will allocate $2.2 billion over the next five years. But how the ECDI funds will be used and the methods of reporting and accountability remain vague, prompting calls for sustained pressure on governments.

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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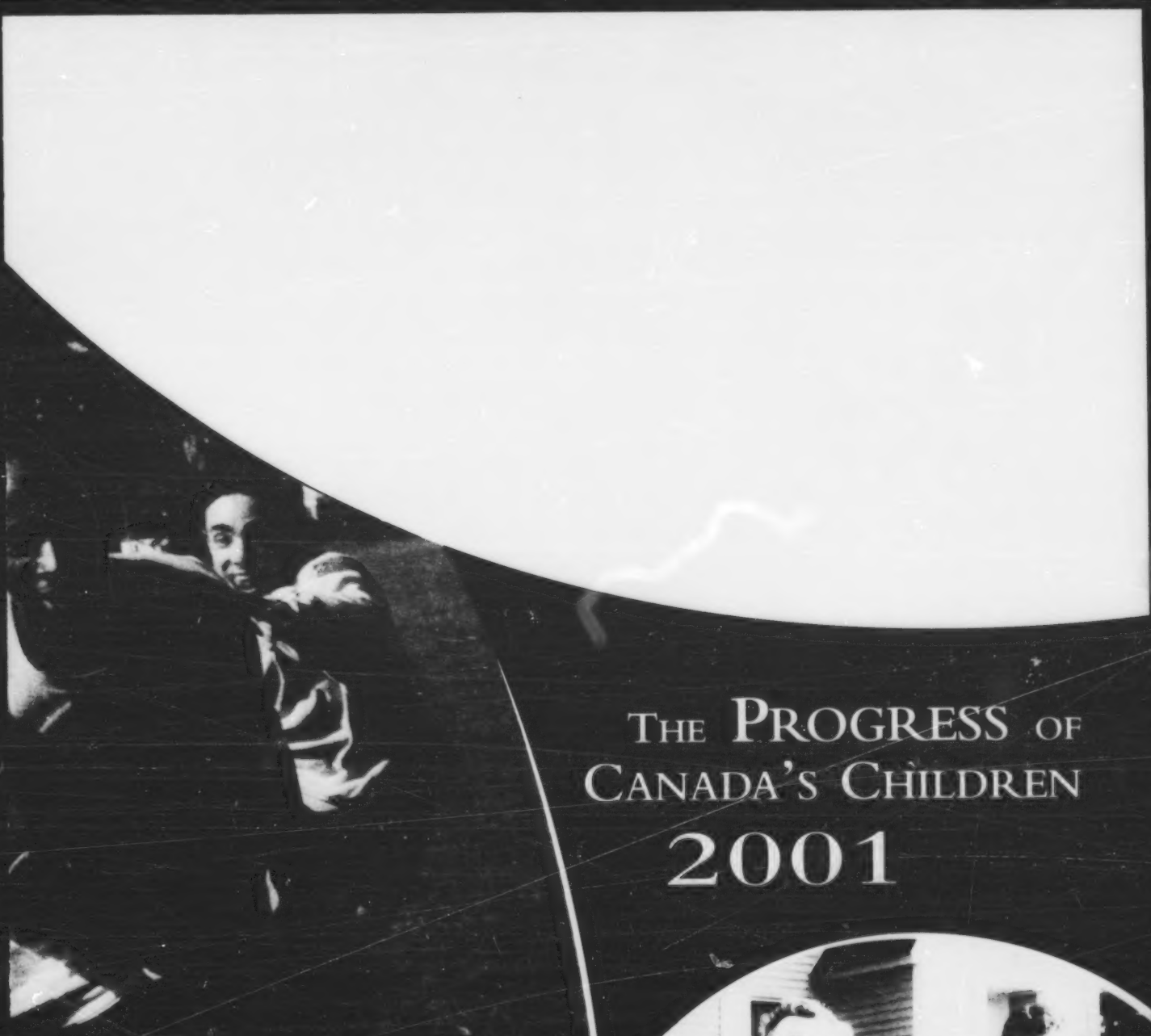

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Acknowledgments

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) wishes to acknowledge the important contributions made to *The Progress of Canada's Children* by Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada through their pioneering work on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. This rich information resource provides the primary source of data for *The Progress of Canada's Children*.

The CCSD also wishes to thank the Laidlaw Foundation for their invaluable support for this project over the last six years. Thanks also to Health Canada, the National Crime Prevention Centre, and TD Securities for their generous contributions towards the 2001 edition of *The Progress of Canada's Children*.

Special thanks to Human Resources Development Canada for its ongoing support of the CCSD's research work.

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The analysis, views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Laidlaw Foundation, Health Canada, the National Crime Prevention Centre or TD Securities.

National Library of Canada cataloguing

The progress of Canada's children

1996–

Also issued in French under title :
Le progrès des enfants au Canada.

ISSN 1208-9109

ISBN 0-88810-501-0 (2001 ed.)

1. Children–Canada–Social conditions.

2. Children–Canada–Economic conditions.

3. Family–Canada–Social conditions.

4. Family–Canada–Economic conditions.

5. Social indicators–Canada.

6. Health status indicators–Canada.

I. Canadian Council on Social Development

HQ792.C3P8 1996- 305.23'0971'05 C97-300208-5

Design and layout: Accurate

Printed on Canadian-made recycled paper.

101-03719/

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INTRODUCTION

THIS IS THE 5TH EDITION OF *THE PROGRESS OF CANADA'S CHILDREN*. AS IN PREVIOUS EDITIONS, WE CONTINUE TO REPORT ON IMPORTANT INDICATORS OF WELL-BEING – THOSE THAT SHAPE THE LIVES AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AND THOSE THAT MEASURE OUTCOMES. THESE INDICATORS WERE DEVELOPED WITH THE HELP OF AN ADVISORY GROUP AND A NATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS.

In the first part of *Progress*, we assess the important influences or inputs that affect the development of children and youth. These *environmental indicators* include family life, economic security, physical safety, community resources, and civic vitality. In the second part of the report, we assess how well Canada's children and youth are doing by examining outcome or *progress indicators* such as health status, social engagement, learning, and the labour force profile of youth. Taken together, these indicators provide a snapshot of the well-being of children and youth in Canada and show how they are faring year by year.

FOCUS ON SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

This 2001 edition of *Progress* places a special focus on school-aged children. School-aged children are a complex and fascinating group. Through this time of their lives, children gain a great deal of independence. They become increasingly involved in relationships and activities outside their own homes and away from their families. Outside influences assume new importance in shaping what they do, the choices they make, and the kinds of individuals they will become. School-aged children take on more and more responsibility for their own actions. They begin to make decisions that are complex and have consequences, both immediate and

long-term. They have tremendous potential for growth, learning and the development of skills that will remain with them throughout their lives. While in some respects they need less immediate support and supervision than they did when they were younger, they continue to need the kind of safe and nurturing environments within which they can take risks, make choices and learn in a safe way. Only in this context can they reach their full potential.

The population of school-aged children in Canada is growing. Between 1990 and 1999, the number of school-aged children increased more than the number of children and youth of all other ages. This means there are increasing numbers of children in our schools, increasing numbers seeking access to such things as recreational and health care services, and increasing numbers of children who need our attention and support.

Good news and bad

What have we learned about school-aged children in this year's *Progress*? There is good news and some worrisome news. In many respects, this is the healthiest time of a child's life. From the standpoint of physical health, school-aged children are faring quite well, comparatively speaking. They have the lowest rates of death and hospitalization of any other age group. That being said, however, there are still too many injuries among this age group – many of which are preventable. And respiratory illnesses continue to rise, many people believe as a result to exposure to environmental contaminants.

The emotional health of school-aged children is causing growing concern among child health experts. The Canadian Institute of Child Health has labelled mental illness as the "new morbidity" for children, and school-aged children are particularly implicated in this diagnosis. A significant proportion of school-aged children have emotional or behavioural problems. A significant proportion of young teens feel lonely and depressed.

Most Canadian children live in families which have the resources to love, support and nurture them extremely well. Most school-aged children live with praise and encouragement. Once again, however, there are worrisome signs. Canadian parents are worried about whether they are raising their children properly. And there is a growing time crunch for families with children – the struggle to balance work and family responsibilities seems to be getting harder. Families are more stressed and less satisfied with the balance between their work and home lives.

An income inequality gap

One of the most worrisome trends in the lives of school-aged children is the increasing gap between affluent and poor families in Canada. This income inequality gap is clearly widening, which means that groups of children are becoming increasingly marginalized. And we have good evidence that children living in low-income families have less access to such things as recreational and physical activities, health benefits, child care, and environmental safety.

Not all school-aged children have the privilege of fully accessing Canada's resources. Certain groups are too-often excluded, either from participation or from the healthy outcomes that the majority enjoy. These groups include Aboriginal children, children with special needs, and some children from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Community resources being squeezed

There are also genuine concerns about the environments needed to support school-aged children. Again, most school-aged children in Canada have access to protection and opportunities. They have access to education and health systems that are envied by others in the world. For many children, all the supports they need are easily available.

But there are growing concerns. Community resources are being squeezed by financial and staffing cutbacks. There are specific examples of this in *Progress*. Key informants have told us that special education services are inadequate for children with special needs. And access to recreation is threatened as user fees become the norm. The physical environment for school-aged children is becoming more worrisome too, for while exposures to some environmental hazards have decreased – such as the elimination of lead in gasoline – children continue to be exposed to toxic chemicals in our air, water and food. Most standards were developed many years ago to protect adults, not children, and they fail to reflect new information on children's environmental health.

Access to safe and affordable housing is becoming increasingly difficult for many Canadian families, and evidence indicates that inadequate housing places risks on children's health and well-being.

A PATCHWORK OF POLICIES

And finally, there is no cohesive policy approach to support school-aged children in Canada. A study by the Canadian Policy Research Networks concludes that while federal and provincial governments have not ignored school-aged children, substantial challenges remain if governments are to live up to their promises in the National Children's Agenda of ensuring that all Canadian children "can fulfill their potential to be healthy, safe and secure, able to learn, be socially engaged and responsible." Current polices and programs go some way towards meeting the challenges of this age group, but they do so in quite varied ways and to different degrees. The patchwork of policies and programs in place reflect the divergent courses charted by federal and provincial governments.

So what does this mean? There has been a great deal of focus recently in Canada on the early years – on young children before they reach school-age. This is indeed critical, because we know that the pathway to healthy development is strongly influenced by a child's early experiences. But let us not forget about our children once they get to school. As adults and as caring Canadians, we must continue to ensure that our school-aged children have access to the supports they need in order to continue to grow and develop to their full potential.

HIGHLIGHTS

PORTRAIT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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FAMILY LIFE

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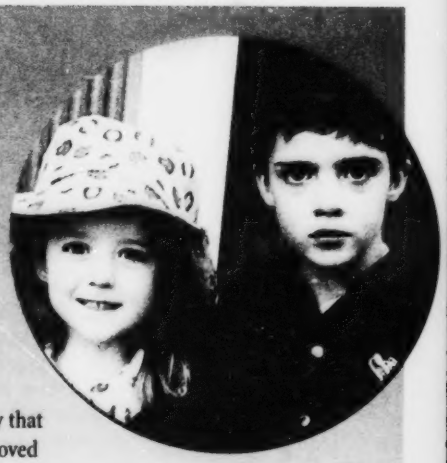

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A modest level of paid work is associated with better school performance, a lower drop-out rate and broader social participation. Working more than 15 to 20 hours per week, however, can have negative effects on school performance.

Policy Initiatives for Children and Youth

The "targeted" approach of governments has resulted in a patchwork of public policies for school-aged children. The general trend away from universality, with emphasis on targeting the early years, adolescence, and youth at risk, has left "holes" in the public policy quilt.

Only two provinces – Québec and British Columbia – have created publicly funded child care systems open to all families – rich, poor, and the large majority in between.

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), a federal/provincial/territorial agreement signed on September 11, 2000, will allocate $2.2 billion over the next five years. But how the ECDI funds will be used and the methods of reporting and accountability remain vague, prompting calls for sustained pressure on governments.

PORTRAIT OF CHILDREN & YOUTH

THE POPULATION OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IS GROWING

In 1999, there were 4,088,246 school-aged children (5 to 14 years) living in Canada. They accounted for 13.6% of the entire population of the country.

- 2,061,663 were aged 5 to 9
- 2,026,583 were aged 10 to 14
- 51% were male, 49% were female.

Between 1990 and 1999, the number of school-aged children in Canada increased more than the number of children and youth of all other ages. The number of pre-schoolers under 5 actually decreased by 5.3% over that period, while the number of teens aged 15 to 19 increased by 6.4%. However, the increase in the number of school-aged children was lower than the increase in the overall population.

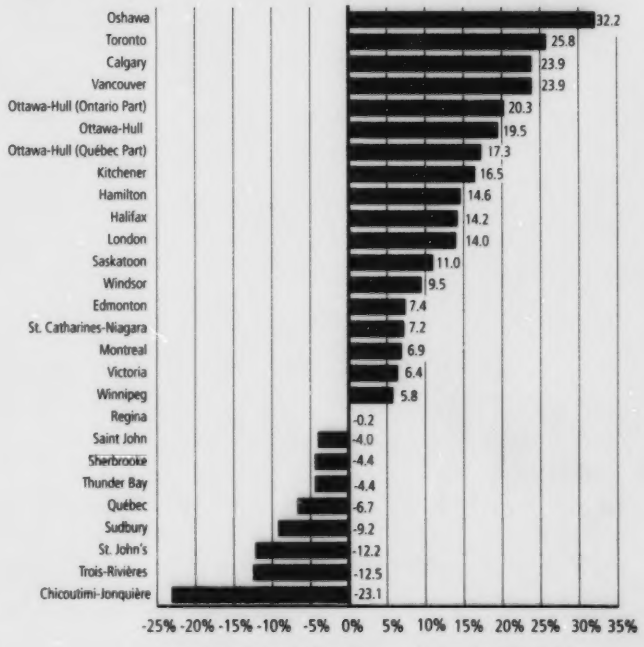
- The number of children aged 5 to 9 increased by 7.2%.
- The number of children aged 10 to 14 years rose by 7.9%.
- Canada's population grew by 10.1%.

TWO-THIRDS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN LIVE IN LARGE CITIES

In 1999, nearly two of every three Canadian children aged 5 to 14 lived in one of Canada's 25 largest metropolitan areas. Over the last decade, the number of school-aged children grew considerably in several cities.

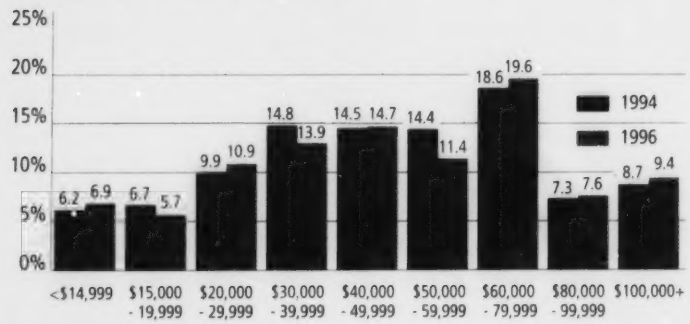
- Between 1990 and 1999, the number of school-aged children in Oshawa increased by 32% – the highest rate of increase for any city. The population of Oshawa grew by only 20%.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (5 TO 14 YEARS), BY LARGE URBAN AREAS (CMAS), 1990 TO 1999



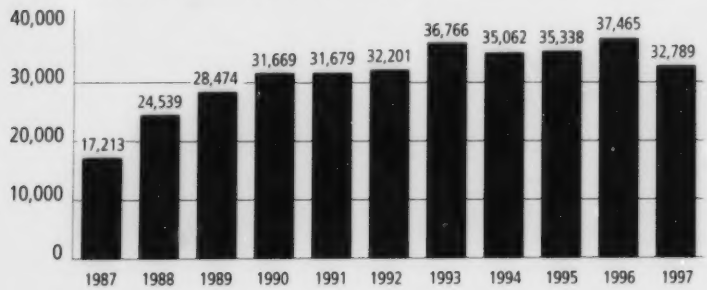
Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Statistics, 1999, CD-ROM.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 11 LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS, BY INCOME LEVEL*



**All incomes are in constant 1994 dollars.*
Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1994 and 1996.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 15 WHO ARRIVED IN CANADA FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, 1987 TO 1997



Source: Statistics Canada, Education Indicators in Canada - Report of the Pan-Canadian Indicators Program, *1999.*

- In Vancouver, the overall population grew by 25% – faster than anywhere else over the decade, and the number of school-aged children increased by 24%.
- In Toronto, the number of 5- to 14-year-olds grew by 26%, while its total population grew by only 17%.
- In Calgary, both the number of school-aged children and the overall population grew by 24%.
- Over the past decade, the number of school-aged children grew in 18 Canadian urban areas.

THE NUMBER OF LONE-PARENT FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN HAS INCREASED

Between 1990 and 1999, the number of lone-parent families with school-aged children increased by 35% – from 209,400 to 283,612. They also increased as a proportion of all families with school-aged children, from 21.6% to 27%, while the proportion of two-parent families declined from 78.4% to 73%.

ONE IN EIGHT LIVE IN FAMILIES WITH VERY LOW INCOMES

According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), in both 1994 and 1996, about one in eight children aged 6 to 11 lived in households with average incomes of less than $20,000 per year. At the other end of the scale, the rate in the highest income families also changed little – from 16% in 1994 to 17% in 1996.

THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL-AGED IMMIGRANTS INCREASED BETWEEN 1987 AND 1997

In 1997, 32,789 children between the ages of 6 and 15 arrived in Canada from other countries – nearly double the number that arrived in 1987, but a drop of 12.5% from 1996.

In 1996, 53% of the immigrant children aged 6 to 15 came to Ontario and another 23% settled in British Columbia.

MOST SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN HAVE MOTHERS WHO WORK

Nearly 80% of women with school-aged children were in the labour force in 1999, compared to 65% of women with children under age 3, and 72% of women with children aged 3 to 5.

Over the last two decades, the number of mothers who were both in the labour force and raising school-aged children jumped by 42.3%. Most of the increase occurred in the 1980s, although the rate continued to rise in the 1990s, from 76.6 to 79.7%. Labour force participation rates for mothers of children aged 3 to 5 grew by 8% and for those with children under age 3, by 7.6%.

By 1999, 79.4% of single mothers with school-aged children were in the labour force – similar to the rate for all mothers of school-aged children. Since 1979, their participation rate has increased by 26.8%, rising 7% in the 1990s alone.

INCREASED NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Because the school-aged population has grown in Canada, and virtually all children of this age attend school, the number of students has been growing. In 1997/98, there were 5,386,302 students enrolled in schools in Canada, including pre-elementary, elementary and secondary grades. The largest number were enrolled in pre-elementary programs, with 507,834 students.

Between 1987/88 and 1997/98, the total number of children and youth enrolled in pre-elementary, elementary and secondary schools in Canada increased by 8.3%.

- Pre-elementary enrollment grew by 15.2%.
- Enrollment in Grades 1 to 6 grew by 5.2%.
- Enrollment in Grades 7 and higher rose by 10.2%.

ENROLLMENT UP IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Enrollment in private schools is clearly rising in Canada. The number of students in private schools rose in seven provinces between 1993/94 and 1997/98. Only New Brunswick, Quebec and Saskatchewan recorded a decrease in private school enrollment.

While the number of students in public schools in Canada rose by only 0.5% between 1993/94 and 1997/98 to 5,027396, the number in private schools rose by 8.6% to 288,174.

In 1997/98, 93.3% of Canadian students were enrolled in public schools, 5.4% were in private schools, and the remainder were in federal schools or special schools for visually and hearing impaired students.

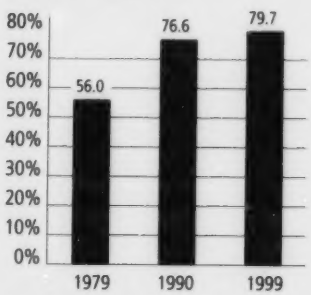
In the Yukon and NWT, 100% of students are enrolled in public schools. Manitoba has the lowest distribution, with 86.7% of students enrolled in public schools, 6% in private schools and 7% in federal schools.

WHERE DO IMMIGRANT CHILDREN SETTLE?

	Number of Immigrant Arrivals		% Distribution within Province
	Aged 6 to 15	All ages	Aged 6 to 15
Canada	**37,465**	**224,870**	
NFLD	62	480	0.2%
PEI	39	186	0.1%
NS	750	3,208	2.0%
NB	108	690	0.3%
QUE	4,690	27,631	12.5%
ON	19,881	119,378	53.1%
MAN	687	4,166	1.8%
SASK	309	1,802	0.8%
AB	2,191	13,949	5.8%
BC	8,714	53,193	23.3%
YK	10	92	*
NWT	24	95	*

** Numbers too small to list.*
Source: Statistics Canada, Education Indicators in Canada - Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program, *1999.*

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES FOR WOMEN WITH CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 15



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, various years.

The rate of increase in private school enrollment has been greatest in Newfoundland, although the actual numbers are still low. In 1993/94, there were 210 students in private schools in that province; by 1997/98, there were 364 – an increase of 73.3%. There was a similar trend in PEI, where students in private schools grew from 189 in 1993/94, to 247 by 1997/98.

ENROLLMENT IN SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IS DOWN

In 1997/98, there were 2,031,900 students at English schools outside Quebec who were enrolled in immersion or regular French-language programs. This was a decrease of 38,300 students from 1993/94 (or 1.9%), and it represents 50.7% of total public school enrollment.

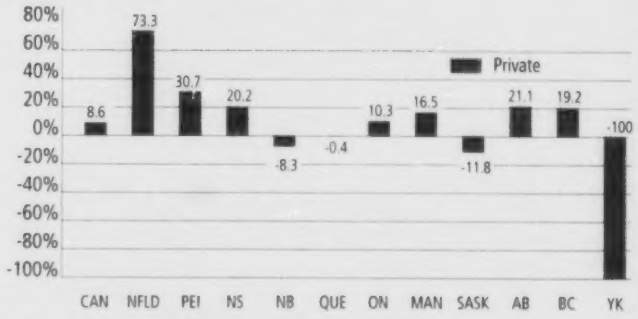
In Quebec, English is a compulsory subject for students in the French school system from Grade 4 through graduation. The participation rate is thus 100% for Grades 4 to 6.

In 1997/98, there were 153,400 students enrolled in French-language instruction outside Quebec, a decrease of 4,600 students compared to 1993/94. In Quebec, enrollment in English schools increased from 98,400 in 1993/94 to 100,600 by 1997/98. or 2.2%.

Enrollment in second-language programs decreased within Quebec and outside the province between 1993/94 and 1997/98. The decrease in Quebec was -5.4% and for the rest of Canada, it was -1.9%.

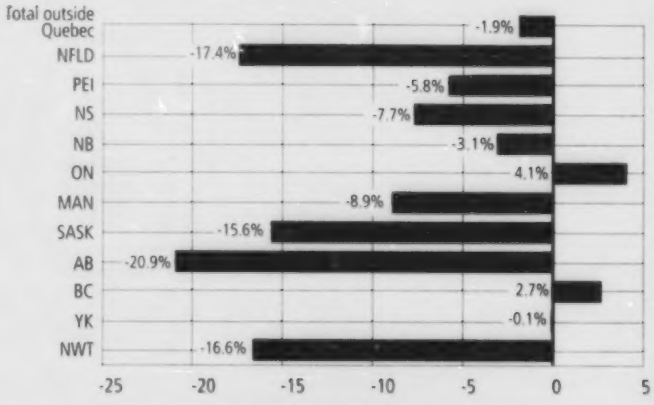
In nine of 11 provinces and territories (excluding Quebec) there was a decrease in second-language school enrollment between 1993/94 and 1997/98. Alberta had the largest decrease at -20.9%, followed by NWT with a drop of -16.6%. ❍

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 1993/94 TO 1997/98



Source: Statistics Canada, Education in Canada, *1999, Table 7.*

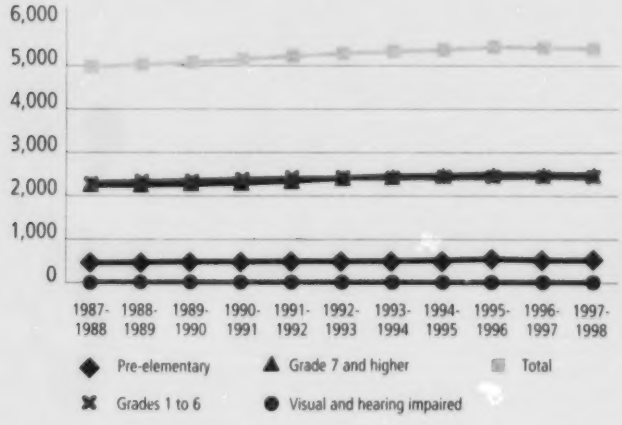
PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT FOR SECOND-LANGUAGE SCHOOL PROGRAMS, OUTSIDE QUEBEC AND PROVINCES, 1993/94 TO 1997/98



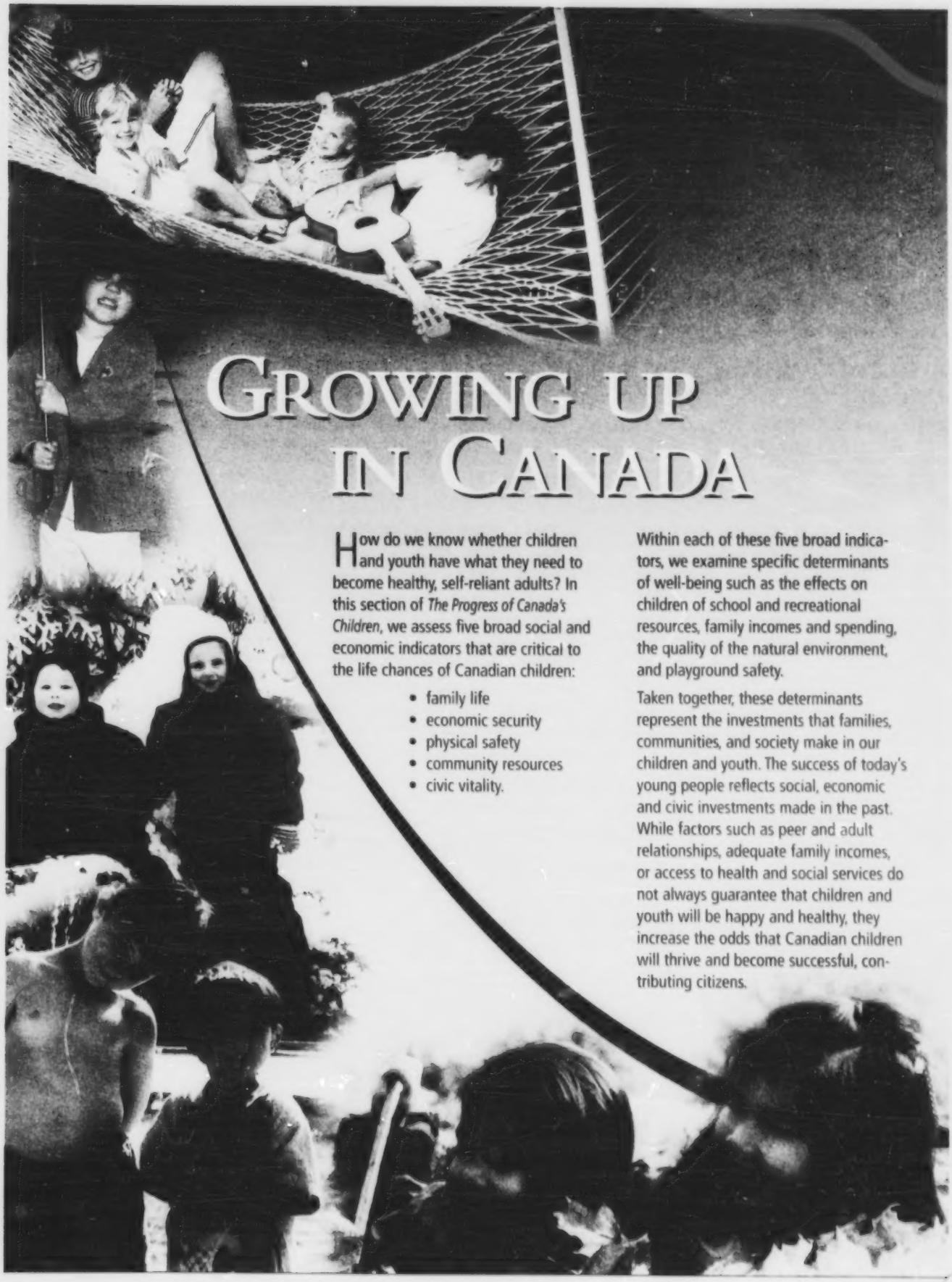
Source: Statistics Canada, Education in Canada, *1999.*

TOTAL FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT, BY LEVEL, CANADA, 1987/88 TO 1997/98

(in thousands)



Source: Statistics Canada, Education in Canada, *1999.*



Growing Up in Canada

How do we know whether children and youth have what they need to become healthy, self-reliant adults? In this section of *The Progress of Canada's Children*, we assess five broad social and economic indicators that are critical to the life chances of Canadian children:

- family life
- economic security
- physical safety
- community resources
- civic vitality.

Within each of these five broad indicators, we examine specific determinants of well-being such as the effects on children of school and recreational resources, family incomes and spending, the quality of the natural environment, and playground safety.

Taken together, these determinants represent the investments that families, communities, and society make in our children and youth. The success of today's young people reflects social, economic and civic investments made in the past. While factors such as peer and adult relationships, adequate family incomes, or access to health and social services do not always guarantee that children and youth will be happy and healthy, they increase the odds that Canadian children will thrive and become successful, contributing citizens.

FAMILY LIFE

The structure of the family and the character of relationships within it make up the primary setting for child development.

FAMILY LIFE OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

School-aged children enjoy increasing independence as they grow older, and they are more heavily influenced by their communities and neighbourhoods. But the family remains one of the crucial cornerstones of their development. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) in 1996 and 1994, *Progress* looked at how parents and school-aged children relate to each other. In general, family relationships are close during this period, as children gradually learn to make decisions within parental limits and to take on some responsibility.

The structure of school-aged children's families

What do these families look like? The vast majority have two parents. In spite of the increasing number of lone-parent families over the last decade, 83% of school-aged children live in families with two parents and 17% live in one-parent families. About one in 10 school-aged children lives in a step-family. The majority of school-aged children (88%) have at least one brother or sister. In fact, almost half (47%) have one sibling, while 28% have two, and 13% have three or more siblings.

Encouraging words

Giving children praise and positive feedback about the things they do makes an important contribution to their healthy development. The NLSCY asked both parents and children how often the parents gave encouragement. The 1996 survey showed a pattern similar to the one in 1994. While the majority of parents praise their children, they generally do it less often as the children get older. Girls are more likely than boys to feel that they receive positive reinforcement (35% compared to 29%).

Overall, about one-third (32%) of children aged 10 to 13 in 1996 said their parents "always" praised them, but there was a considerable range within that group. Thirteen-year-olds were far less likely than 10-year-olds to have this response.

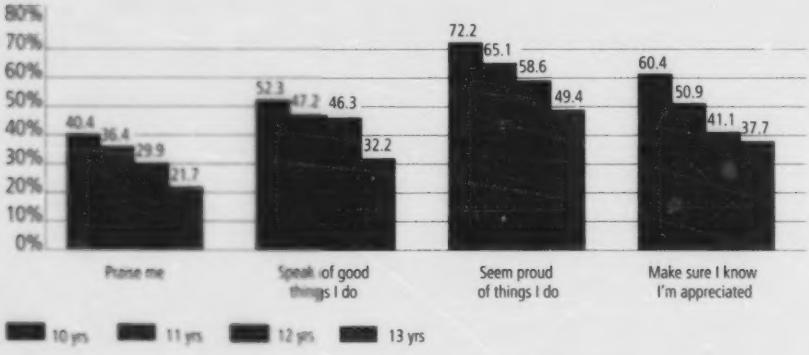
Among parents surveyed, 89% said they praised their 6-year-old children at least once a day. Far fewer (62%) praised their 11-year-olds that often.

Interestingly, parents tended to feel that there was less family problem-solving and communication than did the children. For example, while 19% of parents said they always solved problems together with their children (aged 12 and 13), 27% of children at this age gave the same response. Similarly, 36% of parents of 12- and 13-year-olds said they always listened to their children's ideas and opinions, but 41% of the children at this age felt their parents always listened to them.

Who decides?

Understandably, children gain a certain degree of autonomy from their parents as they grow older. In 1996, nearly seven in ten (69%) 10-year-olds reported that their parents told them what time to be home, compared to 57% of 13-year-olds. Children who said their parents rarely or never let them go out for an evening fell from 61% at age 10, to 38% at age 13.

MY PARENTS ALWAYS...



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

Young teens share some decision-making with their parents, but not all. Children aged 12 and 13 said they had input on some subjects – such as what they wore or the friends they chose – but fewer of them identified bedtime and a weekend curfew as issues that they were always able to decide for themselves. About 38% of children aged 12 and 13 felt they could pick their own friends; about 20% felt they were "almost never" allowed to choose their friends.

MY PARENTS ALWAYS LET ME DECIDE:
(among children aged 12 and 13, 1996)

	Total	Male	Female
Bedtime	11%	9%	13%
Weekend curfew	12%	13%	10%
Friends	38%	37%	39%
What I wear	46%	42%	49%
TV watched	30%	28%	31%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

As children get older, they seem to see their parents' involvement in decision-making less positively. For example, older children (aged 12 and 13) were more likely than younger ones (aged 10 and 11) to feel that their parents often made rules to suit themselves.

SHARING IN EACH OTHER'S LIVES

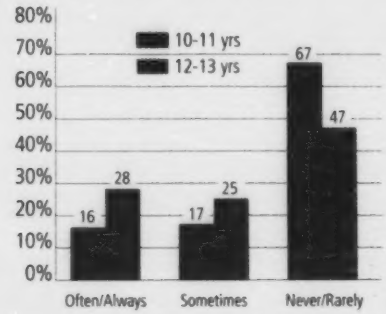
Parents spend less time with their children as the children get older. Many young people in their preteen and early teen years said that, at least sometimes, their parents were too busy to spend as much time with them as they would have liked. In fact, 14% of children aged 12 and 13 felt this was "often or always" the case. However, most children (64%) felt that their parents were "rarely or never" too busy to spend the amount of time that the children wanted.

Sharing secrets with their parents is not a common activity among young adolescents. About four in 10 children (40%) aged 12 and 13 rarely or never shared secrets with their parents. However, 8% said they always do, and an additional 21% said they do "most of the time." Girls were more apt than boys to report sharing secrets all of the time (36% compared to 30%).

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY

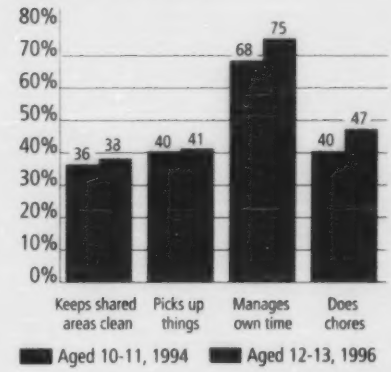
Most children aged 10 to 13 perform routine chores around the home at least sometimes. Across Canada, about four in 10 children aged 10 and 11 did chores often (40% in 1994 and 42% in 1996). Girls aged 10 to 13 were more likely than boys to make their own beds (45% compared to 38%) and to clean their own rooms (41% compared to 34%).

PARENTS MAKE RULES TO SUIT THEMSELVES
(Responses of children aged 10-11 in 1994, and aged 12-13 in 1996)



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 and 1996.

CHILDREN OFTEN PERFORM SELECTED CHORES



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 and 1996.

By age 10, six in 10 children (61%) were said by their parents to be often managing their own time, but this skill increased with age to nearly eight in 10 (80%) among 13-year-olds.

Although most children aged 10 and 11 have never had a job, 33% reported that they had a job (such as a paper route or babysitting) in 1996, up from 23% in 1994. At age 12 and 13, 21% of boys and 34% of girls were working five hours or more per week for pay. About 6% of all children working for pay were spending their money on things for their family – such as buying groceries.

CANADIAN PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT RAISING CHILDREN

In September 1999, Canadians were asked how they felt about raising children today. Many are worried.

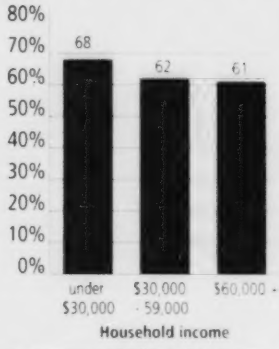
CANADIANS WORRY WHETHER PARENTS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING

Almost two-thirds (63%) of those surveyed agreed with the statement: "I worry about whether parents today really know what they are doing when it comes to raising children." Canadians with higher household incomes and a university education were less likely to worry than those with lower incomes and less education.

PARENTS WORRY WHETHER THEY ARE RAISING THEIR CHILDREN PROPERLY

Among those with children living at home, six in 10 (62%) agreed with the statement: "One of the biggest worries in my life is whether I am raising my children properly." Of that group, 23% agreed strongly with the statement and 39% agreed somewhat. Four in 10 (37%) either disagreed (28%) or strongly disagreed (9%). Parents in low-income households were more likely to worry about child-rearing than those with higher incomes. Younger parents were more likely to worry than older parents, and women were more likely to worry (64%) than men (59%).

AM I DOING IT RIGHT?
Canadians with children living at home who are worried that they are not raising their children properly, by household income, 1999



Source: Angus Reid Poll, "Family Matters: A Look at Issues Concerning Families and Raising Children in Canada Today," September 27, 1999.

HOW DO FAMILIES SPEND THEIR TIME?

Previous reports, including *Progress*, have pointed to a growing "time crunch" for families with children. If anything, the struggle to balance work and family responsibilities seems to be getting harder.

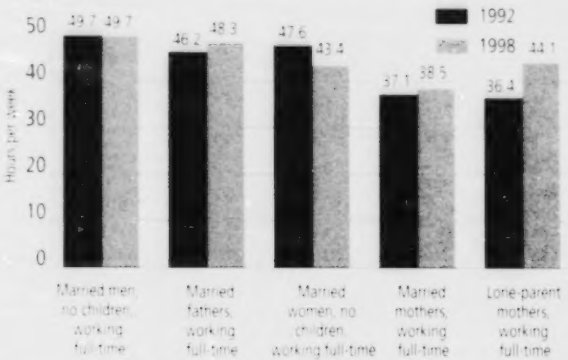
PARENTS ARE SPENDING MORE TIME ON PAID AND UNPAID WORK

Between 1992 and 1998, parents with children found themselves increasing the amount of time they spent on both paid and unpaid work. For married parents aged 25 to 44 who were employed full-time, their paid work activities increased by two hours per week. In 1998, fathers averaged 48.3 hours and mothers averaged 38.5 hours per week of paid work and related activities – up 5% for fathers and 4% for mothers since 1992.

Lone-parent mothers increased their time spent doing paid work even more than did married mothers. On average, lone-parent mothers working full-time spent 44.1 hours on paid work and related activities, up 21% (36.4 hours) from 1992.

Hours spent on unpaid work are also up, though less so. In 1992, married fathers working full-time spent 22.4 hours per week on unpaid work activities; that increased by 3% to 23.1 hours in 1998. For married mothers working full-time, with children, unpaid work activities grew from 33.6 hours in 1992 to 34.3 hours in 1998, a 2% increase.

WEEKLY TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, MEN AND WOMEN, AGED 25 TO 44, 1992 & 1998



Sources: Vanier Institute of the Family, From the Kitchen Table to the Boardroom Table, 1997, and calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, 1998.

Married mothers and fathers are spending slightly more time doing housework, and the increase has been greater for fathers than for mothers. Between 1992 and 1998, the average number of hours spent doing housework every week increased by 7% for fathers and by 2% for mothers.

PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT RAISING CHILDREN

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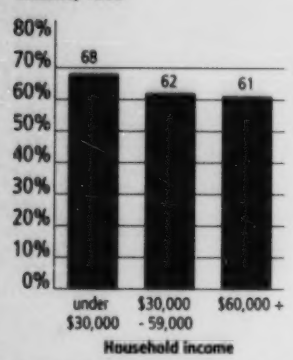

Source: Angus Reid Poll, "Family Matters: A Look at Issues Concerning Families and Raising Children in Canada Today," September 27, 1999.

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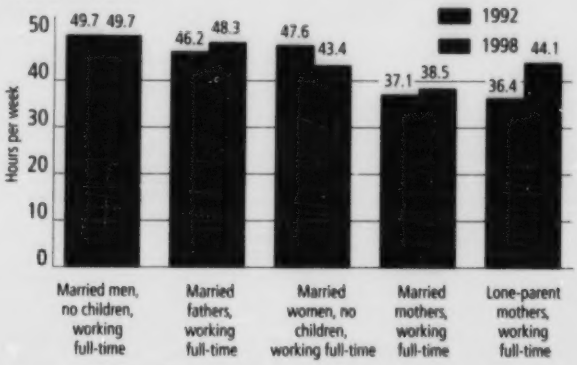

Sources: Vanier Institute of the Family, From the Kitchen Table to the Boardroom Table, *1997, and calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, 1998.*

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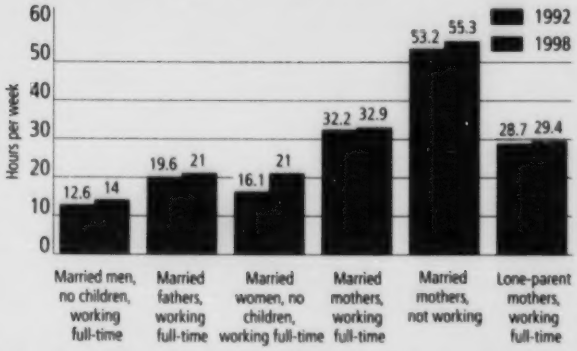
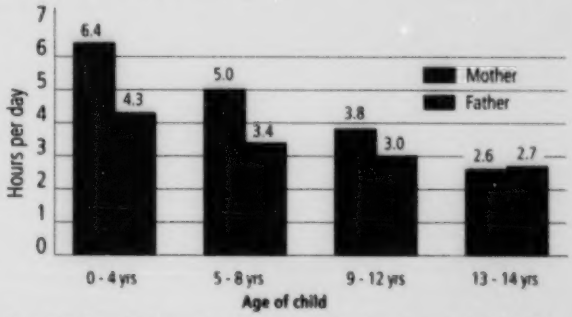
WEEKLY TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD WORK, MEN AND WOMEN, AGED 25 TO 44, 1992 & 1998



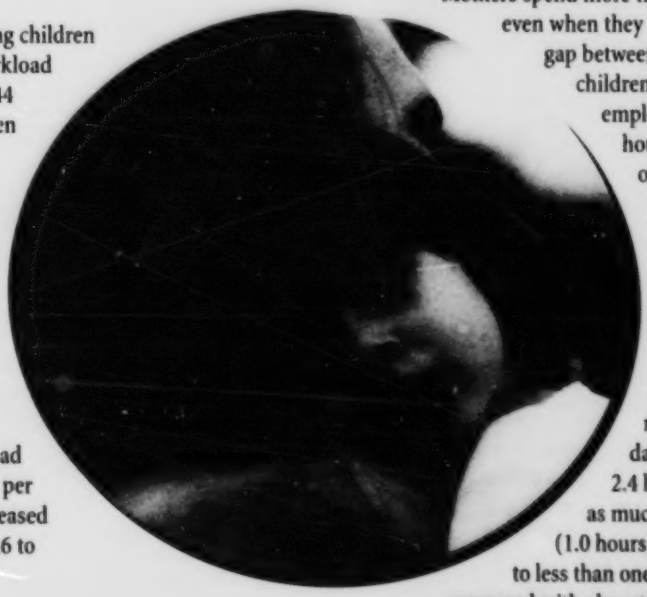
Sources: Vanier Institute of the Family, From the Kitchen Table to the Boardroom Table, *1997, and calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, 1998.*

AVERAGE HOURS SPENT WITH CHILD PER DAY, 1998
both parents employed full-time



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, 1998.

Not surprisingly, having children increases the total workload of parents aged 25 to 44 working full-time, when compared to other adults without children. When they become parents, both married women and men increase the total number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work: men increased their workload from 9.4 to 10.3 hours per day, while women increased their workload from 9.6 to 10.5 hours per day.



PARENTS HAVE LESS TIME FOR LEISURE

Working more means having less time for leisure activities, including such things as reading, watching television, socializing, participating in sports, doing hobbies, or playing games. Both mothers and fathers aged 25 to 44 working full-time have, on average, 0.7 or about three-quarters of an hour less leisure time per day than their counterparts without children. This gap in leisure hours between parents and non-parents has widened slightly since 1992, when it was 0.2 hours.

Mothers tend to have less leisure time than fathers. Full-time employed mothers aged 25 to 44, both married and single, have the least amount of leisure time – only 3.6 hours a day. Fathers working full-time reported 4.2 hours a day of leisure time. Mothers working part-time had 4.5 hours a day of leisure time, and non-employed mothers had 5.0 hours a day.

WHAT ABOUT TIME WITH THE CHILDREN?

Mothers spend more time than fathers with their young children, even when they work full-time for pay. However, the time gap between mothers and fathers narrows as their children grow older. In 1998, mothers who were employed full-time spent an average of 6.4 hours a day with their children under the age of five, compared to 4.3 hours spent by fathers. By the time kids reach their early teens, however, dads and moms both reported spending about 2 hours and 40 minutes a day with their children.

Mothers also devote a larger share of their time away from work to their children. For example, fathers of pre-schoolers recorded over an hour more leisure time per day than did mothers (3.5 hours compared to 2.4 hours). And although fathers spent almost as much leisure time with their pre-schoolers (1.0 hours) as did mothers (1.2 hours), it amounted to less than one-third of their available leisure time, compared with almost half of mothers' time. A similar gap was observed among parents of children aged 5 to 8. The gender gap was small for parents with older children.

FAMILIES ARE MORE STRESSED AND LESS SATISFIED

The majority of parents – about two-thirds of full-time employed parents with children – are dissatisfied with the balance between their job and home life. Fathers and mothers alike blamed their dissatisfaction on not having enough time for the family, but many also complained of spending too much time on the job.

Canadians aged 15 and older reported higher levels of time stress in 1998 than in 1992. Both married parents and single mothers employed full-time and between the ages of 25 and 44 reported the highest levels of time stress. Twenty-six per cent of married fathers, 38% of married mothers and 38% of single mothers reported severe time stress. ❍

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Economic security refers to an assured standard of living that can provide families with the level of resources and benefits necessary to participate economically, politically, socially, culturally, and with dignity in their community's activities.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND CHILDREN, 1993 TO 1998

Family income has a direct impact on the living conditions and opportunities that children experience. Between 1993 and 1998, there were two important trends in the family income data for children:

- Children under age 18 living in the poorest of families are getting poorer, while the richest are better off, and children under 18 in families in the low-to-middle range are barely holding their own financially.
- While more than two-thirds of children (under age 12 in 1993) did not experience poverty during this period, persistent poverty lasting four or more years affected 12% of children.

A Widening Gap

The 1990s began with a recession, but the Canadian economy has been growing strongly for several years. Have the incomes of families with children under 18 grown along with the economy?

The table on the next page shows that over the 1993-98 period, the average pre-tax annual family income for children under age 18 increased by a modest amount (7.2%) to $63,482. But there were large variations within this average, depending on where a child's family was on the income scale.

The average family income of children under 18 in the highest income category grew by about 14.5% to $159,790 since 1993. But children in the lowest income category saw their family's average income shrink by 6.5% to $13,813 – a drop of almost $1,000 in real income.

Children in families at the low- to middle-end of the income scale are basically treading water financially. For example, the average family income of the fourth lowest income group – which was $42,066 in 1993 – had increased by only $689 in 1998 (1.6%).

The income inequality gap is clearly widening. In 1993, children's families in the highest income group had 9.5 times more income than those in the lowest. By 1998, they had 11.6 times more.

All along the income scale, the higher the average family income, the higher the increase in income between 1993 and 1998 – both in real dollars and as a percentage of income.

Persistent Poverty

Families can move in and out of poverty, particularly in times of high unemployment. Some families also suffer temporary setbacks due to marital breakup. Recent studies have shown that the length of time that a child lives in poverty is very important. Evidence from the NLSCY and other research suggests that deep and persistent family poverty has a significant effect on both the short-term and long-term developmental outcomes of children.

Looking at children who were aged 12 or younger in 1993, *Progress* tracked the income of their families over time, up to 1998. Slightly more than two-thirds of these children (68.7%) did not experience poverty during this period. But almost 1 in 3 lived through at least one year of poverty (31.3%). That

CHILDREN'S FAMILIES' INCOME, 1993 TO 1998

Average annual family income, by decile, constant 1998 $, children under 18 yrs

Decile	1993	1996	1998	Difference, 1993 to 1998 $	%
Lowest	$14,767	$12,997	$13,813	-$954	-6.5
Second	$25,040	$22,994	$25,072	$32	0.1
Third	$34,077	$31,729	$34,212	$135	0.4
Fourth	$42,066	$40,617	$42,755	$689	1.6
Fifth	$49,872	$48,996	$51,698	$1,826	3.7
Sixth	$56,987	$57,212	$58,386	$3,260	5.7
Seventh	$65,102	$65,508	$69,261	$4,159	6.4
Eighth	$75,038	$76,332	$80,358	$5,320	7.1
Ninth	$89,408	$91,378	$97,445	$8,037	9.0
Highest	$139,591	$146,759	$159,790	$20,199	14.5
Canada	$59,218	$59,467	$63,482	$4,264	7.2
Ratio of Lowest to Highest Decile	9.5	11.3	11.6		

Source: Calculations by the CCSD using Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993 to 1998.

proportion is somewhat higher than the 28.1% of all children (up to age 18) who experienced at least a year of poverty between 1993 to 1998.

It could be argued that one year of poverty may not have much of a negative impact on a child's development. However, approximately 1 in 13 children (7.6%) among the group studied lived in poverty throughout the entire six-year period, and 12% spent four or more consecutive years living in poverty. This means that approximately 1 in 8 children in this age group experienced a severe period of poverty.

These data suggest that a considerable proportion of Canada's young children are living with chronic conditions of poverty which are putting their prospects for healthy development at risk. ❍

CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN POVERTY, 1993 TO 1998

Children aged 12 or younger in 1993

	Per cent	Number
None	68.7%	3,173,600
One year	11.2%	516,000
Two years	4.9%	228,500
Three years	3.2%	148,700
Four years	2.2%	99,400
Five years	2.2%	102,500
Six years	7.6%	351,600
Total	100.0%	4,620,300

Source: Calculations by the CCSD using Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993 to 1998.
Note: Poverty is defined as less than the pre-tax LICO.

...LY SECURE DO PARENTS FEEL?

But 56% of working-age Canadians were confident that they could find an equivalent job within six months. Only 45% of single parents and 54% of people who were married or living common-law with children were similarly confident.

About one in five working-age Canadians (19%) reported that they would not be able to sustain themselves for more than one month if they and their spouse lost their jobs. Again, lone parents were the most vulnerable, with 37% reporting total savings that would not allow them to sustain their households beyond one month. Seventeen per cent of two-parent families were in the same economic situation. ❍

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HOW FINANCIALLY SECURE DO PARENTS FEEL?

How financially secure – or precarious – do Canadian families feel? An Angus Reid survey done for the CCSD in 1999 found the following:

- **16% of Canadians felt that their income was not adequate to meet their family's basic needs.**
- **13% of couples with children felt that way.**
- **The most vulnerable group were single parents – almost one-third (32%) could not meet their children's basic needs.**

Job security has a lot to do with financial confidence. The survey found that 26% of employed Canadians in 1999 felt they were likely to lose their job over the next two years. The same proportion (26%) of single parents had this concern, as did 23% of couples with children.

But 56% of working-age Canadians were confident that they could find an equivalent job within six months. Only 45% of single parents and 54% of people who were married or living common-law with children were similarly confident.

About one in five working-age Canadians (19%) reported that they would not be able to sustain themselves for more than one month if they and their spouse lost their jobs. Again, lone parents were the most vulnerable, with 37% reporting total savings that would not allow them to sustain their households beyond one month. Seventeen per cent of two-parent families were in the same economic situation. ❯

How Families Spend

Progress tracks the spending patterns of families to see where the major pressures are. This year's data reveal a trend of increasing costs for education and recreation among families with children. These costs are most significant for families with less to spend.

What has happened over the last two years?

In 1998, the average two-parent family with children had expenditures totalling $69,537, an increase of 2.4% over the previous year ($67,899). Spending patterns changed very little over the two years, with the largest proportions going to personal taxes, shelter costs, transportation and food, in that order. In 1998, personal taxes rose by 2.3% over the previous year, and transportation costs were up almost 6%. Shelter costs were down slightly from 1997.

Between 1997 and 1998, the greatest expenditure increase for two-parent families with children was household furnishings, up 8.3% from $1,781 to $1,929. Spending on education increased significantly from $1,225 to $1,308 – an increase of almost 7%. Child care costs rose by 4%, from $708 to $740.

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INCOME RANGES FOR CANADIAN HOUSEHOLDS, 1992 & 1998

Income Range	1992	1998
Lowest income range	<$40,104	<$41,999
Middle income range	$40,104 - $64,217	$42,000 - $67,999
Highest income range	>$64,218	>$68,000

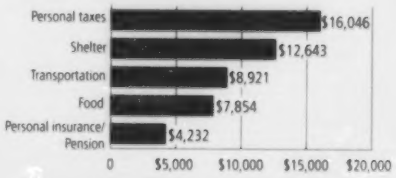
Note: All amounts are in constant 1998 dollars.
Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Family Expenditures, 1992 *and* Survey of Household Spending, 1998.

What has happened over the decade?

There is no question that family expenditures have increased significantly over the last decade. However, the degree of those increases is closely linked to a family's level of household income.

A comparison of family expenditures between 1992 and 1998 reveals that education costs – such as costs for textbooks, supplies, tuition and other school fees – have risen dramatically. The increase was most pronounced for the lowest income group, whose spending on education increased by an astounding 107%, from an average of $238 per year in 1992, to $493 in 1998! For middle- and high-income families, the increase was 58%.

TOP FIVE EXPENDITURES FOR TWO-PARENT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, 1998



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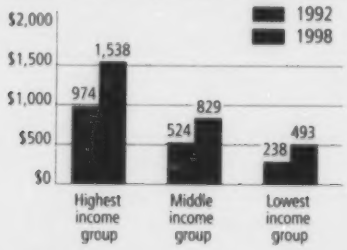
EDUCATION EXPENDITURES FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, 1992 & 1998 by household income level



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HOW DOES CANADA MEASURE UP?

The UNICEF International Child Development Centre released its first Report Card on child poverty in rich countries. Despite unprecedented economic growth since the mid-century, the report found that a disturbing percentage of children are still living in families whose income is not enough to meet normal health and growth are at risk. A smaller number live in what the report calls "the shameful world of relative poverty" in which children's basic needs may be met, but they are excluded from activities and advantages considered normal by their peers.

Using the Luxembourg Income Study, the UNICEF Report found that the wide range of poverty rates – from under 3% to over 20% among the 16 industrialized nations. In total, one out of every six children in industrialized countries lives in poverty. Canada's child poverty rate is among the worst, at 15.5%. Only Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy and the U.S. have higher rates.

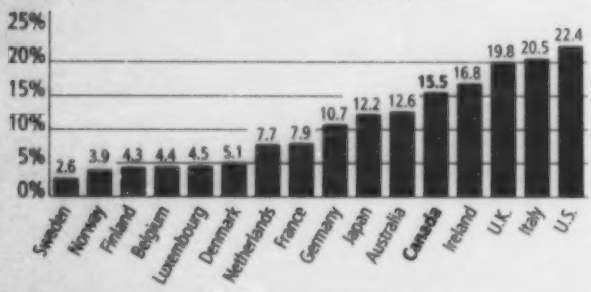
The report examined the relationship between child poverty and contributory factors such as lone parenthood, employment and its distribution, wage inequality and levels of social expenditures. The report found that:

- a child's chance of living in poverty is, on average, four times greater in lone-parent families;
- there is a close relationship between child poverty rates and the percentage of households in which there is no employed adult;
- the relationship between child poverty rates and the percentage of full-time workers who earn less than two-thirds of the national median wage.
- countries with the lowest child poverty rates allocated a higher proportion of GNP to social expenditures.

No single factor alone, but the combination of both macro-economic conditions and social policies that determines a country's child poverty rate. Therefore, to effectively lower child poverty levels, progress is required on all fronts – reducing poverty among lone-parent families, reducing the proportion of children living in households where there is no employed adult, reducing severe wage inequalities at the bottom end of the income scale, and narrowing the gap between transfer payments and average wages.

The Report Card concludes that meeting this challenge requires the participation and commitment of individuals and organizations throughout the industrialized world. "Few challenges could be more complex. None could be more important. For it is by how society protects and cares for the development of its children that its civilization is measured, its humanity tested, and its future shaped." ❍

INTERNATIONAL CHILD POVERTY, MID-1990s
Per cent of children living below national poverty line



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Costs associated with recreation have also been rising over the 1990s. This includes everything from movie tickets to admission to a local museum. In 1998, all families with children were paying more for recreation than they had in 1992. Those in the lowest income group were paying $1,895 per year on average in 1998 – 20% more than they had paid in 1992 ($1,574). The recreation costs for middle-income families with children increased the most (25%), while those in the highest income group increased the least (16%).

While lower-income families with children increased their spending on education and recreation more than did upper-income families, the amount that they have to spend on these items is considerably lower. In 1998, families in the lowest income group spent $1,895 on recreation, compared to $5,982 spent by families in the highest income group. For education, lower-income families spent $493, compared to $1,538 spent by higher-income families. ❍

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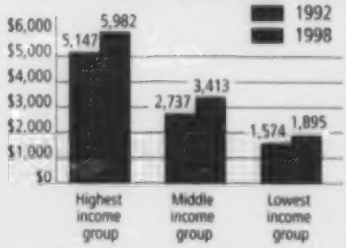

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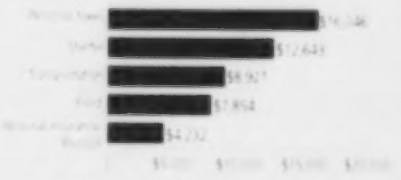

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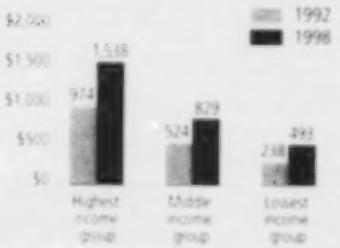

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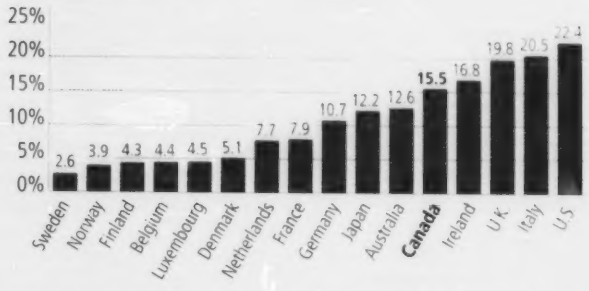

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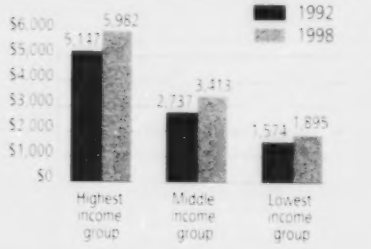

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Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Family Expenditures, 1992 *and* Survey of Household Spending, 1998.

YOUNG FAMILIES AND CHILDREN MORE VULNERABLE TO POVERTY

The success of Canada's income security programs in reducing poverty among seniors stands out as one of our most notable achievements of the past quarter-century. That success, however, magnifies our failure to address the problem of poverty among children and young families, according to a study by the CCSD.

The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty 2000 notes that the age distribution of poverty has shifted markedly. In particular, poverty has increased among young households where one or both adults are under age 25. In 1981, a young family faced a 21.7% chance of being poor; by 1997, the rate had more than doubled to 46.1%.

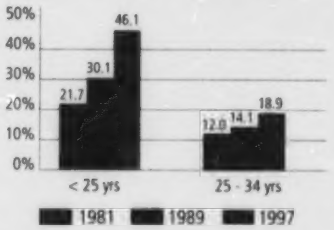
This significant increase in poverty is related to the difficulties that young adults continue to have in obtaining secure employment at living wages. The majority who are employed hold down one or more part-time or temporary jobs, often while juggling the demands of school. While this may suit some people in this age group, there are many others who cannot sustain themselves or their families on a part-time job at the mall.

How are young people responding to the costs and stresses of having children today? Demographic data from Statistics Canada show that they are delaying childbearing – 31% of births in 1997 were to mothers over age 30, compared to 19% a decade earlier – or they are opting out altogether. Falling birth rates are a clear indication of the deteriorating economic conditions among young Canadian families. In effect, children are being priced out of the market for many average-income earners.

There are alternatives, however. Various European countries place a much higher value on achieving social cohesion, and consequently, on providing support for children and families as part of their society's collective responsibility for its citizens. Canada, on the other hand, is committed to extending public assistance, but only to those deemed "most needy." These different social goals are reflected in the policies and programs that countries pursue and, most importantly, in the outcomes for children.

After years of persistent efforts by grassroots organizations, Canadian governments have recently reiterated their concerns about poor children, but they have done little to tackle the root causes of child and family poverty. Indeed, Canada stands out internationally as having no coherent family policy. The patchwork of programs in place across the country tend to be highly targeted and of varying quality. It is hard to escape the conclusion that children are thought of more as the "private goods" of parents, rather than as a collective national treasure and responsibility. ❍

POVERTY RATE AMONG YOUNG FAMILIES, 1981, 1989 & 1997



Source: Calculations by the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's Survey of Consumer Finances.

LEVEL OF INCOME	1981	1989	1997
Average after-tax family income (1994 $):			
All families with children	$43,700	$44,615	$47,444
two-parent families	$48,200	$48,403	$51,814
lone-parent families	$22,500	$23,497	$25,028
DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME	**1981**	**1989**	**1997**
Number of poor children	1,362,000	1,515,900	1,338,000
Child poverty rate	19.5%	21.4%	19.0%
among children in lone-parent families	56.4%	61.8%	56.3%
among children in two-parent families	12.7%	14.9%	12.2%
POVERTY GAP	**1981**	**1989**	**1997**
Poverty gap of families with children (0-17) (constant 1998 $)	$9,553	$9,902	$9,489
STABILITY OF INCOME	**1981**	**1989**	**1997**
Families with children (0-17) that experienced a period of long-term unemployment	12.2%	9.9%	7.5%
SOURCE OF INCOME	**1981**	**1989**	**1997**
Children (0-17) living in families relying on income transfers	14.0%	14.2%	13.1%
Children (0-17) living in families relying on earnings	83.0%	81.6%	83.9%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's Survey of Consumer Finances and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.
Note: Poverty is defined as less than the pre-tax LICO.

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Physical safety refers to the quality of children's natural and built environments and the threats to their personal safety and well-being.

ROAD SAFETY

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death among school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14. The majority of these deaths are from motor vehicle traffic collisions. The good news is the trend: over a 10-year period from 1987 to 1997, the death rate on our roads among school-aged children went down.

A High Cost in Young Lives

Of all the school-aged children who died in 1997, more than one-third – 115 children aged 5 to 9 and 146 children aged 10 to 14 – died as a result of unintentional injuries. In addition, 8,841 children aged 5 to 9 and 9,573 children aged 10 to 14 were admitted to hospital with unintentional injuries. Such injuries were the leading cause of hospitalization for the older group and the second leading cause (after respiratory illness) for the younger ones.

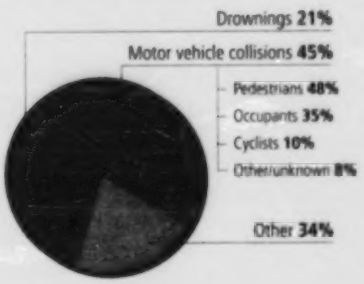
Boys are injured and killed at a higher rate than are girls in both age groups. The death rate from unintentional injuries for 5- to 9-year-old boys is 6.8 per 100,000 population, compared to a rate of 4.4 for girls. Among 10- to 14-year-olds, the death rate for boys is twice that of girls – 9.6 per 100,000 population, compared to a rate of 4.7 for girls. The hospitalization rate for younger boys is 1.5 times that of girls, and the older school-aged boys are hospitalized at twice the rate of girls.

Motor vehicle traffic collisions killed 45% of the children aged 5 to 9 who died of unintentional injuries in 1997. Of the children aged 10 to 14 who died, 52% were involved in motor vehicle crashes. Younger children are more likely to be pedestrians than occupants of vehicles; the older children are just as likely to be pedestrians or cyclists as occupants.

There is some comfort in the trend line. Between 1987 and 1997, the rate of death due to motor vehicle traffic crashes declined among both age groups:

- by 55% for boys aged 5 to 9 and by 50% for girls.
- by 52% for boys aged 10 to 14 and by 27% for girls.

UNINTENTIONAL INJURY DEATHS, BY CAUSE OF DEATH
for children aged 5 to 9, 1997



n = 115

UNINTENTIONAL INJURY DEATHS, BY CAUSE OF DEATH
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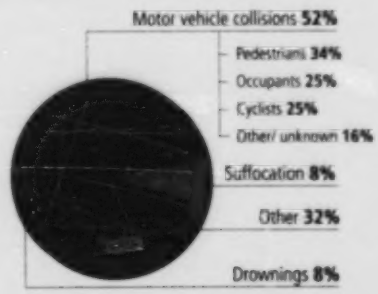


n = 146
Source: CHIRP, Canadian Injury Data, Mortality - 1997 *and* Hospitalizations - 1996/97.

Pedestrian Safety

Children under age 9 are particularly vulnerable to injury as pedestrians because the skills needed to safely handle traffic exceed their abilities at this developmental age. Programs that teach them to cross the street safely by themselves have generally not proven effective.

According to an Environics Poll conducted for Safe Kids Canada in April 1999, 41% of parents with children under 15 "always" or "sometimes" let their children under age 9 go for walks that involve crossing a street without an adult; 42% said they don't. There were striking differences by region.

Parents with lower incomes were less likely than parents with higher incomes to let their children walk alone, and they were more likely to say that their children needed supervision. The responses of wealthier parents may be related to the safety of their neighbourhoods, thus highlighting the importance of efforts to improve the safety of neighbourhoods where poorer children live.

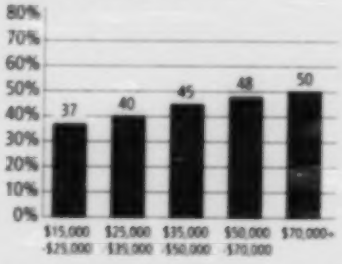
Vehicle Safety

Proper use of seat belts is an obvious protective factor for school-aged children. In the Environics Poll, 91% of parents with children under 15 said they always properly restrain their child. The response was similar across all income ranges.

Data from Transport Canada show that in 1997, 89% of children aged 5 to 9 and 86% of those aged 10 to 15 were properly restrained in their vehicle – much improved from the rates in 1989, when only 59% of the younger kids and 68% of the older children were properly restrained.

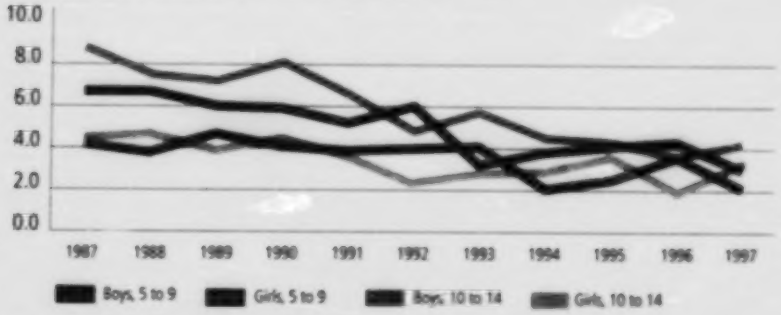
The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth found that nearly three-quarters (74%) of children aged 12 and 13 said they "always" used their seatbelt (78% of girls and 69% of boys). Unfortunately, children living in rural areas are less likely to buckle up.

I'D LET MY CHILD (UNDER AGE 9) CROSS STREETS ALONE
% of parents, by income level, 1999



Source: Safe Kids Canada, Focus Canada Survey: Attitudes and Behaviours on Road Safety, Environics Research, August 1999.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES, 1987 TO 1997
Mortality rates per 100,000, for children aged 5-9 and 10-14



Source: CHIRP, Canadian Injury Data, Mortality - 1997 and Hospitalizations - 1996/97.

In 1996, only 59% of children aged 12 and 13 in rural areas "always" wore a seatbelt, compared to 67% in urban areas with a population under 30,000, and 81% in urban areas of 500,000 or more.

Cycling Safety

Bike helmets have been proven to protect children from death and injury. According to the Environics Poll, parents living in provinces with bike helmet legislation were more likely to report that their child always wore a helmet when cycling. Those in provinces without legislation were more likely to report that their child rarely or never wore a helmet.

Across Canada, 77% of parents said they always required their child to wear a helmet, 14% said they usually did, 4% rarely, and 4% never. And there was a clear socio-economic trend: the proportion of parents who insist on helmet use increases with education and income level. The National Population Health Survey also found an income-related gap in helmet use among youth. While the use of bicycle helmets increased overall

THESE FEET ARE MADE FOR WALKIN'

How can Canadian parents keep their kids safe from traffic on the way to school? One obvious choice – take them by car – isn't as good an idea as it may seem. Adding another car to the mix of vehicles around your child's school may well create more danger than it avoids.

In 1994/95, for example, Canada's 5.4 million full-time elementary and secondary students commuted daily to and from 15,000 schools, for an average concentration of almost 340 full-time student commuters per school. Even without counting teachers, staff, visitors and parent drivers, the resulting traffic concentration is considerably greater than that of a typical work site.

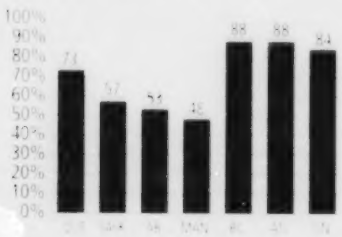
As an alternative to car commuting, teaching kids about safe routes to school and accompanying younger children on foot offers potential benefits to children, parents, and the larger community. Go for Green (www.goforgreen.ca) has an Active & Safe Routes to School program that focuses on these benefits.

Fewer car trips to and from school reduces traffic and the risk of injuries. It is also good for the environment. Children who get used to going places on foot or by bicycle may pick up the habit of lifelong physical exercise, which would be good for their health. And parents who walk with their younger children benefit from the exercise and the time spent talking and listening. ❯

Active commuting facts:

- 45% of Canadian children live 2 km or less from their school.
- 47% of Canadian children never walk to or from school, and only 29% do so "nearly all the time."
- 91% of school-aged children have a bicycle.
- 64% of Canadian children never cycle to or from school, and only 2% do so "nearly all the time."

I INSIST THAT MY CHILD WEAR A BIKE HELMET EVERY TIME
by region, 1999



Source: Safe Kids Canada, Focus Canada Survey: Attitudes and Behaviours on Road Safety, Environics Research, August 1999.

between 1996 and 1998 among young people aged 12 to 19 – from 55% to 62% among 12- to 14-year-olds and from 22% to 28% among 15- to 19-year-olds – the rate actually dropped among poor kids.

The average age at which parents said they would let their child cycle without supervision was 9.1 years, and the most frequent answer was age 10 (19%). ❯

SMOG ALERT

Smog is killing Canadians. According to the 2000 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, air pollution can be linked to 5,000 deaths each year in 11 major Canadian cities.

Smog is primarily made up of ozone and particulate matter. However, it also includes a nasty mixture of chemicals such as nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds. The major causes of smog are motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, and coal-fired power plants.

Exposure can result in respiratory illnesses and shortness of breath, coughing, headaches, and burning eyes. Children are particularly at risk because of their narrow airways, more rapid rate of respiration, and the fact that they inhale more pollutants per pound of body weight. ❯

FOR WALKIN'

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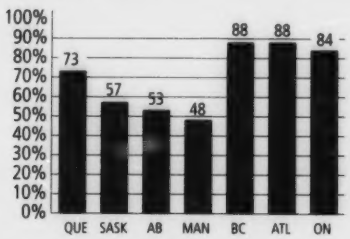

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PLAYING SAFER

Each year, more than 28,500 Canadian children are treated at hospitals for playground injuries. Of these, 2,000 are actually admitted to the hospital. Eighteen playground deaths have been reported since 1982 – 17 due to strangulation. Falls account for almost three-quarters of all playground injuries. Most involve climbers, slides or swings.

Young children aged 5 to 9 are the group most frequently injured on playgrounds. This is likely because they are able to play at significant heights, but they lack a sense of danger. A typical injury is a fracture resulting from a fall from a climber.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has developed a standard for the design, installation and maintenance of public play equipment which, if adhered to, should minimize children's risk of death and injury. The standard was updated in 1998.

A random study of 205 city parks by the Montreal public health department in 1995 (pre-dating the new CSA standard) found problems with the design and installation of almost half of all play structures. In poorer neighbourhoods, more than two-thirds of the installations were below standard. And Montreal is not unique. A 1996 study by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group concluded that more than half of all playgrounds were unsafe.

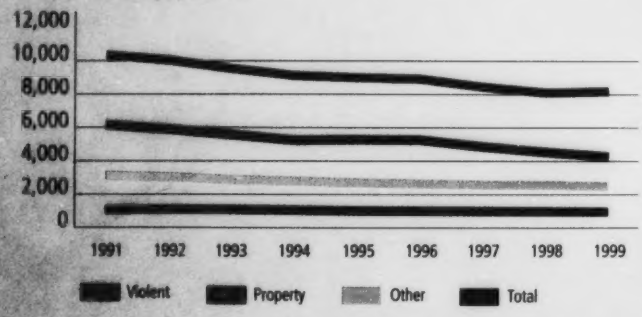
Outdoor play is important for children's healthy development, and there are growing concerns that too many young children are too inactive, with long-term health consequences. Outdoor play offers children the opportunity to explore things like space, height and balance. And although most serious injuries could be prevented by removing all heights from playground equipment, this would also remove an important focal point for the challenges children need from outdoor play.

Maintaining the balance between freedom and safety is difficult, so experts urge playground operators to adopt an approach that minimizes risk. Some jurisdictions now require day cares and schools to immediately upgrade their existing facilities to the CSA standard or to remove non-compliant equipment. Safe Kids Canada recognizes that this can cause problems, so they recommend that playground operators do the following:

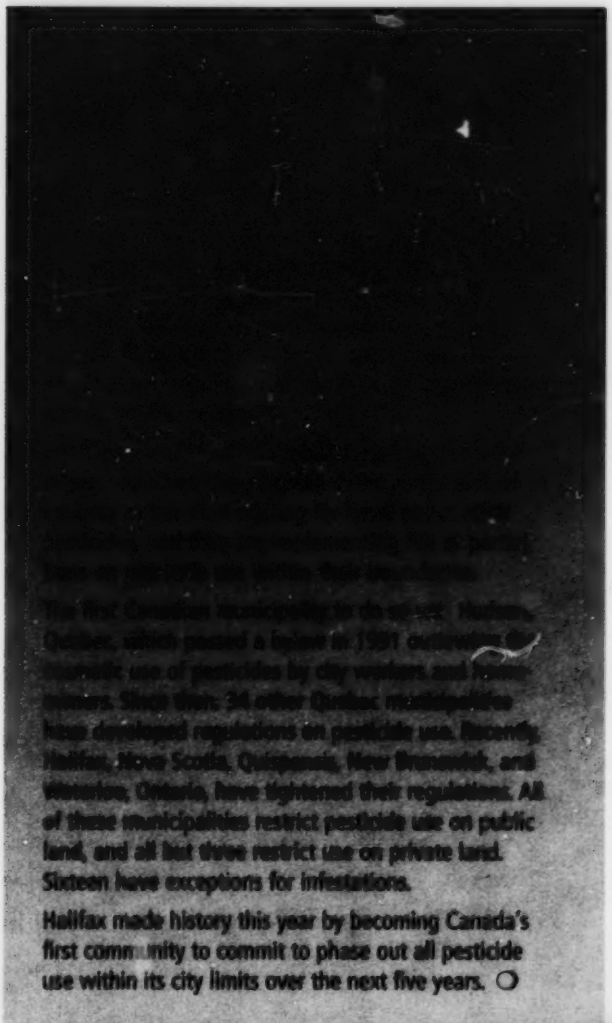
1. Assess playgrounds, preferably with the help of a qualified playground inspector.
2. Make a plan to address any hazards.
3. Remove or repair life-threatening or potentially disabling hazards right away.
4. Plan to upgrade serious but non-disabling hazards as quickly as possible.
5. Plan to bring the entire play space up to CSA standard over the next few years.
6. Plan to keep playgrounds inspected and maintained on a regular basis.
7. Make upgrading the protective surfacing a top priority. ❍

CANADIAN CRIME RATES, 1991 TO 1998

Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Sylvain Trembley, "Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999" in Juristat, *Vol. 20, No. 5, 2000.*



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SPECIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

Current environmental standards are based mainly on our knowledge of how adults are affected by various contaminants. But what about our children? One of Canada's leading authorities on the healthy development of children, the Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH) in its 2000 report, *The Health of Canada's Children*, highlighted a number of reasons why children are particularly susceptible to environmental contaminants.

Children

- are more active and more likely to breathe in contaminants.
- have food preferences that regularly expose them to contaminants.
- eat more foods that are potentially high in contaminants, such as fruits and vegetables.
- engage in more hand-to-mouth activities.
- live closer to the ground, both indoors and outdoors.
- are not able to minimize their own exposure to environmental contaminants.
- have respiratory volumes greater than adults, relative to their body weight.
- eat more food and drink more fluids for their body weight than adults, resulting in higher rates of absorption.

The fact that we are all at risk from environmental contaminants is worrisome, but it is even more alarming that children are especially vulnerable to these risks. There are studies underway on the effects of environmental contaminants on the healthy development of children, but many questions remain, particularly about the long-term effects.

There is growing evidence that childhood cancers and respiratory illnesses are on the rise. In 1998, the National Cancer Institute reported that over the last 25 years, there has been a 25% increase in the incidence of cancer among children under age 15. And Statistics Canada reported a four-fold increase in childhood asthma over a 20-year period. While more research is required to determine the precise role that environmental contaminants play in these increases, there are some international studies that suggest a causal link to changes in the environment. ❍

Health outcomes associated with pesticide exposure:

- decreased fertility
- spontaneous abortion
- birth defects
- in utero growth retardation
- low birth weight
- neuro-behavioural deficits
- childhood cancers such as leukemia and brain tumours

19

Playing Safer

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Crime Statistics

Children's physical safety is affected by their community environment, and crime is one factor in that environment. Canada's national crime rate, as reported by the police, is the lowest it has been since 1979. The rate dropped by 5% from 1998 to 1999, the 8th consecutive year of decline. Rates for both violent crime and property crime continue to fall. ❍

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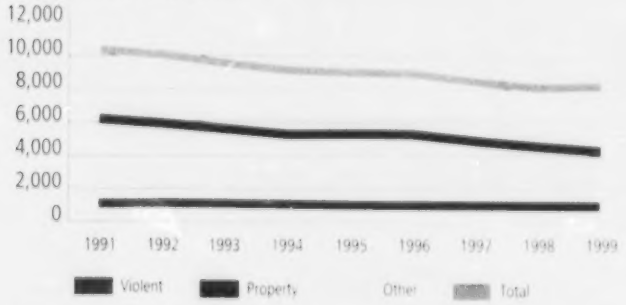

Source: Sylvain Tremblay, "Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999" in Juristat, *Vol. 20, No. 5, 2000.*

WELCOME TO HALIFAX: NO NEUROTOXINS, PLEASE

In June, Health Canada announced a ban on chlorpyrifos, a common household insecticide that has been widely used for over 30 years. The ban highlighted public concerns over pesticide use and was based on research indicating that exposure to chlorpyrifos at critical periods of child development may result in irreversible damage to the growing nervous system, including impairment of normal brain development.

For the sake of children's health, growing numbers of municipalities are choosing to err on the side of caution, rather than waiting for news about other pesticides, and they are implementing full or partial bans on pesticide use within their boundaries.

The first Canadian municipality to do so was Hudson, Quebec, which passed a bylaw in 1991 outlawing the cosmetic use of pesticides by city workers and homeowners. Since then, 34 other Quebec municipalities have developed regulations on pesticide use. Recently, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Quispansis, New Brunswick, and Waterloo, Ontario, have tightened their regulations. All of these municipalities restrict pesticide use on public land, and all but three restrict use on private land. Sixteen have exceptions for infestations.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community resources are the opportunities and supports that are available to children and youth within their local communities, including education and training, housing, health care, child and family supports, and leisure and cultural activities.

ACCESS TO RECREATION THREATENED

It is widely accepted that participation in recreational activities enables children to achieve better physical and emotional health, develop psychosocial skills, and improve their self-esteem. In 2000, CCSD, in collaboration with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, conducted a survey of 167 municipal recreation departments across Canada about children and youth's access to such programs. All provinces and territories were represented among the departments that responded.

The survey covered five programs: aquatics, athletics and arts programs for school-aged children and youth, after-school programs for school-aged children, and drop-in programs for youth. It found financial barriers to participation for low-income children and youth.

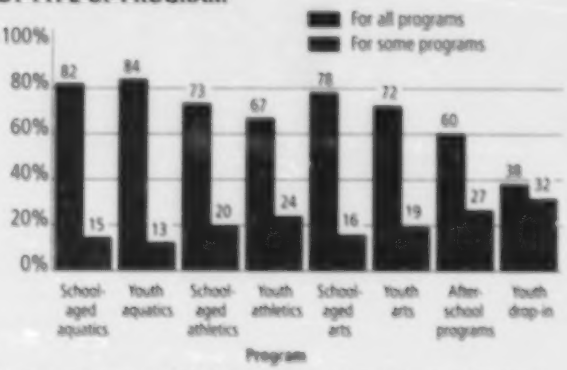
WHAT PROGRAMS ARE BEING OFFERED?

The majority of departments surveyed offered all five programs. The most common were aquatics and athletics programs for school-aged children and youth. About 90% of all departments offered aquatics and athletics programs; about 75% offered arts programs for school-aged children, and fewer (two-thirds) offered these programs for youth. Just over half (56%) of the departments surveyed offered after-school programs, and 70% offered drop-in programs for youth.

ARE THERE USER FEES?

Most recreation departments charge user fees for all of their programs. User fees are most common in aquatics: over 80% levied a charge for all their courses, and another 15% charged for some. Athletics programs were slightly less likely to charge user fees.

RECREATION DEPARTMENTS CHARGING USER FEES, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM

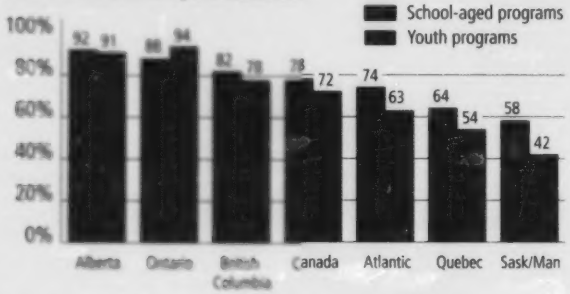


Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, Survey of Canadian Municipal Departments of Recreation, 2000.

DO ALL CHILDREN PAY?

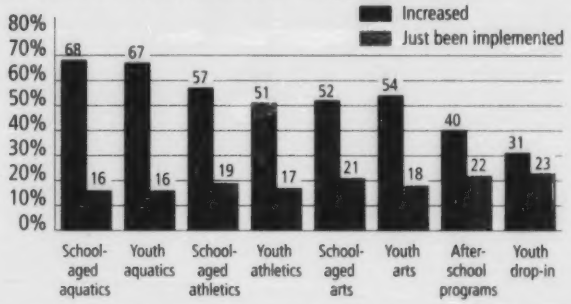
Among recreation departments that have user fees for all of their programs, a large proportion charge all children – the proportion varies according to the program. Approximately 80% charge all children for aquatics programs. Fewer charge all children for after-school programs (48%) or drop-in programs for youth (31%).

RECREATION DEPARTMENTS WITH USER FEES FOR ALL ARTS PROGRAMS, BY REGION



Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, Survey of Canadian Municipal Departments of Recreation, 2000.

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, OUR USER FEES HAVE ...



Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, Survey of Canadian Municipal Departments of Recreation, 2000.

Are there differences across Canada?

In almost all cases, a greater proportion of recreation departments in Alberta and Ontario than in other areas charged user fees for all their programs. In almost all cases, Quebec had the lowest proportion of departments charging user fees. For example, in Alberta, 93% of departments charged for all aquatics programs for school-aged children and youth, compared to 70% of departments in Quebec. In Ontario, 93% charged for youth aquatics programs, and 85% charged for school-aged children's aquatics. In the areas of arts and athletics, the same pattern emerged.

Have user fees changed?

Most user fees are going up. For the majority of aquatics, athletics and arts programs, user fees have risen over the last five years. In a further 15 to 20% of cases (depending on the program), user fees have been implemented in the last five years, and in another 25% of cases, they have remained the same. User fees decreased in less than 2% of cases. Most increases ranged from 10 to 25%.

Among the departments responding, 13 to 20% felt that user fees were a significant barrier to some children's participation, and more than half felt they were a moderate barrier.

Other barriers to participation

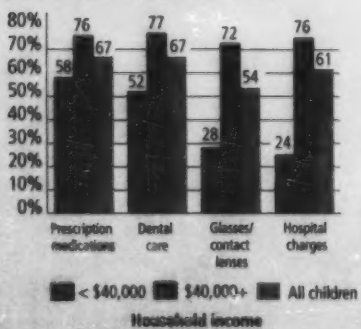
Other barriers to participation were identified by 88% of departments, the most common being transportation. Many children and youth simply have no way of getting to a facility to participate in programs. Other significant barriers included limited facilities, equipment costs, social and cultural barriers, lack of awareness or support by parents, and family time constraints. Just over half the departments (57%) had developed strategies to reduce these barriers, including offering programs within walking distance, providing transportation, and changing program schedules to better accommodate working parents. Other strategies included working with cultural and community groups to promote programs and services, ensuring that program staff were reflective of the community, and holding equipment exchanges. ❍

INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

In the past, *Progress* has investigated drug and dental insurance coverage for children across Canada and found the coverage to be sporadic. Using the National Population Health Survey, this year we examined the insurance coverage for one group of school-aged children in a variety of ways.

The data show that 67% of children aged 12 to 14 have insurance coverage for prescription drugs and dental care, 54% have insurance for eyeglasses or contact lenses, and 61% have insurance covering hospital charges. However, there are differences based on family income: lower-income families are far less likely to have this coverage than are higher-income families. ❍

CHILDREN AGED 12 TO 14 WITH INSURANCE COVERAGE, BY FAMILY INCOME, 1996



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Population Health Survey, 1996.

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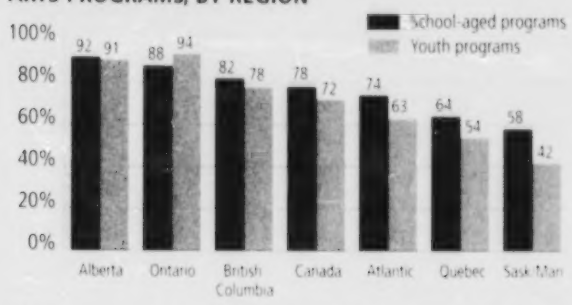

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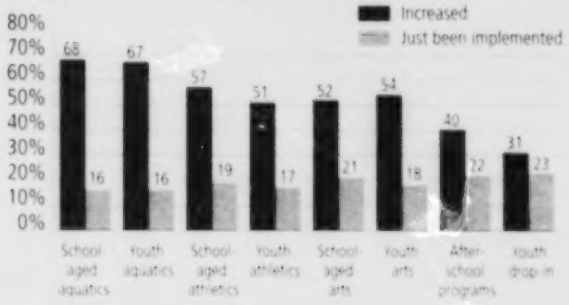

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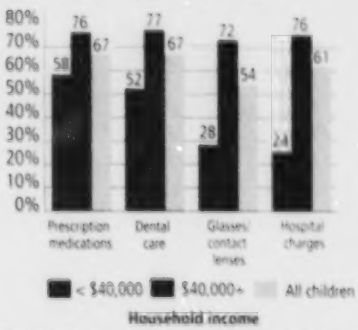

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Special education in Canada

Experts in special education across Canada are deeply concerned about the adequacy of resources – both financial and professional – to meet the special needs of children, particularly those in rural areas. In 2000, CCSD, in collaboration with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, surveyed experts in the field using a key informant questionnaire.

While the majority of those interviewed felt that per capita funding had increased in the last five years, most felt that it was still not sufficient to provide services to all children with special needs, and complexities in provincial funding formulas have made it difficult to get funding to children who require it. In Ontario, for example, stringent guidelines are making it more difficult for children with special needs to receive assistance. Ontario elementary school teachers report that it can take up to six hours to complete one claim for special education services.

There are many dedicated teachers who are trying to ensure that all children receive a quality education, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to deliver those services to all the children who require them.

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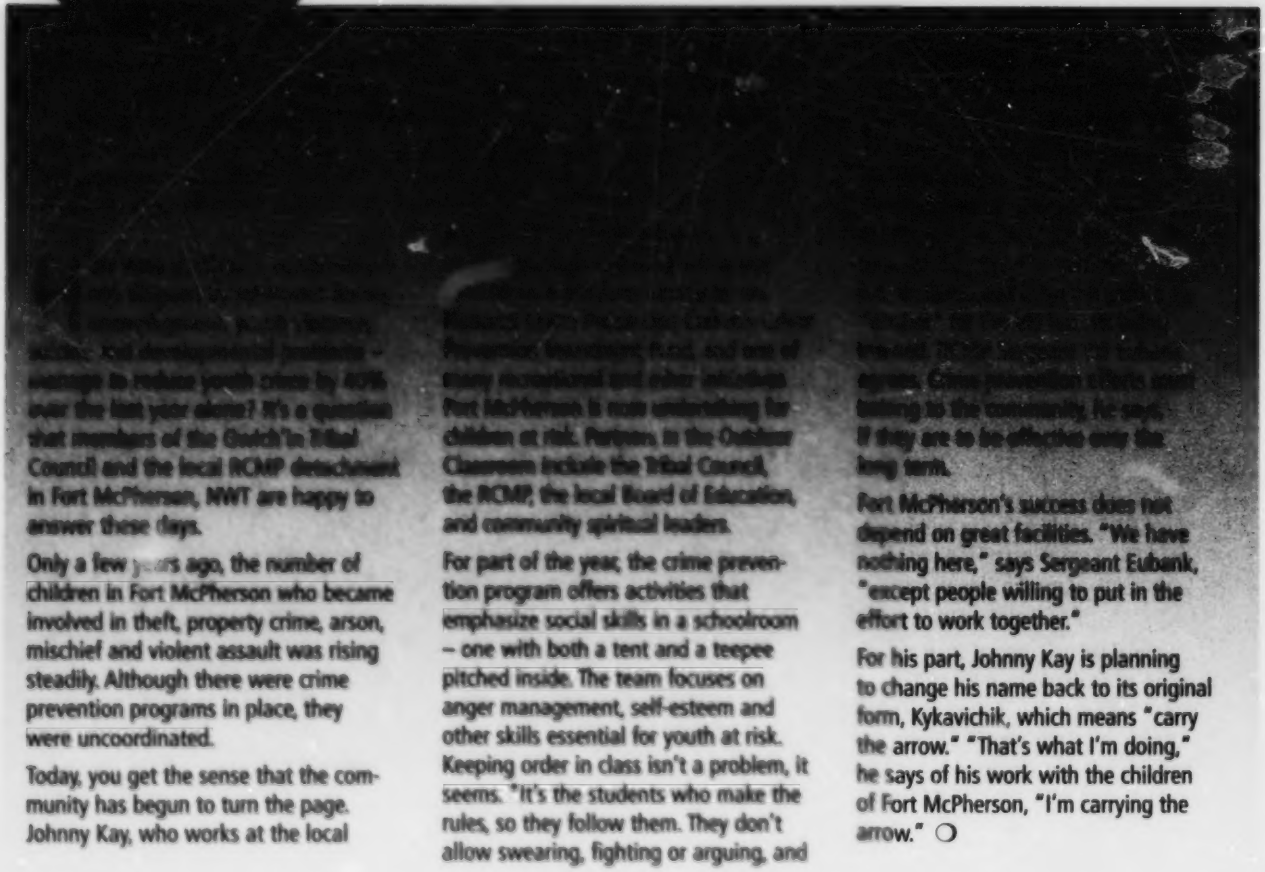
The CCSD questionnaire asked how the special needs of children with physical disabilities were being met in urban and rural centres. The survey found that children in cities are clearly



average to reduce youth crime by 40% over the last year alone? It's a question that members of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the local RCMP detachment in Fort McPherson, NWT are happy to answer these days.

Only a few years ago, the number of children in Fort McPherson who became involved in theft, property crime, arson, mischief and violent assault was rising steadily. Although there were crime prevention programs in place, they were uncoordinated.

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Fort McPherson is now welcoming for children at risk. Partners in the Outdoor Classroom include the Tribal Council, the RCMP, the local Board of Education, and community spiritual leaders.

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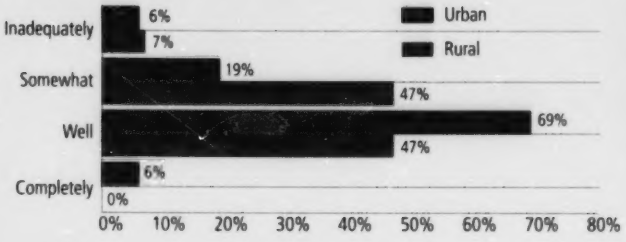
HOW ARE STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES BEING SERVED IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS?



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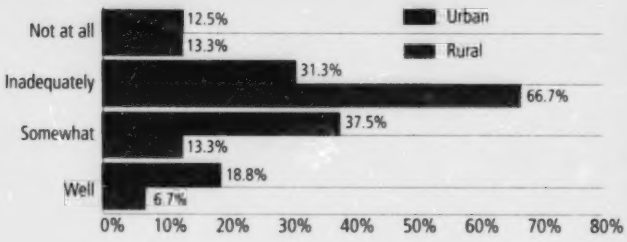

Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, Key Informant Survey, 2000.

better served than those in rural areas: 75% of the respondents felt that the needs of urban children are well or completely met, compared to 47% for rural children.

According to 80% of the experts surveyed, special education services for children with emotional disturbances living in rural areas are inadequate or non-existent. In many cases, these children must go to urban centres to receive any assistance. But urban children are not doing that well either, with 44% of the experts reporting inadequate or no special education services for children with emotional disturbances in urban areas as well.

Funding is a critical issue, with 82% reporting that the level of funding for special education services in their provinces is inadequate to meet the needs of the children.

Students with special needs often require the assistance of many professionals, including speech pathologists, school psychologists and occupational therapists. Fully 100% of the experts surveyed said there were not enough of these non-teaching professionals in their province. None reported an increase in the supply of these professionals over the last five years; 62% said the number had stayed the same, and 38% reported a decrease. The experts expressed deep concern over the lack of specialists and they stressed how critical these professionals are to the education of a special needs child.

Another problem identified by the survey concerned fitting children into "program boxes." Children with emotional and behavioural problems often have difficulty getting services because they do not fit neatly into the standard educational framework. ❍

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The outdoor classroom

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Only a few years ago, the number of children in Fort McPherson who became involved in theft, property crime, arson, mischief and violent assault was rising steadily. Although there were crime prevention programs in place, they were uncoordinated.

Today, you get the sense that the community has begun to turn the page. Johnny Kay, who works at the local school, says it would be hard to pin down one single factor to account for the positive results. Instead, he credits the "full-court-press" approach taken by a number of agencies to tackle their community problems together.

A native of Fort McPherson, Mr. Kay is a Project Assistant for the Outdoor Classroom, a program funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre's Crime Prevention Investment Fund, and one of many recreational and other initiatives Fort McPherson is now undertaking for children at risk. Partners in the Outdoor Classroom include the Tribal Council, the RCMP, the local Board of Education, and community spiritual leaders.

For part of the year, the crime prevention program offers activities that emphasize social skills in a schoolroom – one with both a tent and a teepee pitched inside. The team focuses on anger management, self-esteem and other skills essential for youth at risk. Keeping order in class isn't a problem, it seems. "It's the students who make the rules, so they follow them. They don't allow swearing, fighting or arguing, and they show respect for our guests." Guests can include tribal elders, liaison RCMP officers, counsellors and others.

For two weeks in March, the students live outdoors at Tl'oondih Camp, where they learn traditional skills and respect for the land, assisted by elders and mentors. For Kay, the focus on recreation, fun, tradition and culture provides an "anchor" for the life lessons being learned. RCMP Sergeant Bill Eubank agrees. Crime prevention efforts must belong to the community, he says, if they are to be effective over the long term.

Fort McPherson's success does not depend on great facilities. "We have nothing here," says Sergeant Eubank, "except people willing to put in the effort to work together."

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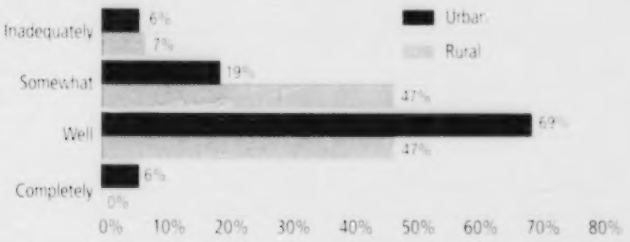

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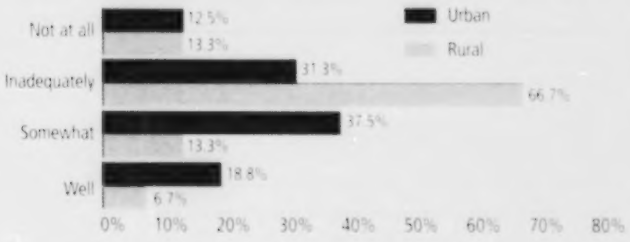

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Another problem identified by the survey concerned fitting children into "program boxes." Children with emotional and behavioural problems often have difficulty getting services because they do not fit neatly into the standard educational framework. ❍

YOUTH IN CARE AND EDUCATION

A unique study recently undertaken by the National Youth in Care Network suggests that a high percentage of the approximately 60,000 children and youth in the care of Canadian child welfare authorities will not complete high school. Without a post-secondary degree today, employment prospects are slim, and without even a high school diploma, the prospects for youth in care are simply grim.

For most young people in the child welfare system, the decisions made in their lives are institutionally controlled, including those about education. Often their wishes are not heard, much less understood. Through discussions with youth in care across Canada, the National Youth in Care Network learned more about the young people's experiences and dreams. Together, they developed recommendations and explored policy implications to help support youth in care to complete high school and enter adulthood with a strong foundation for success and stability.

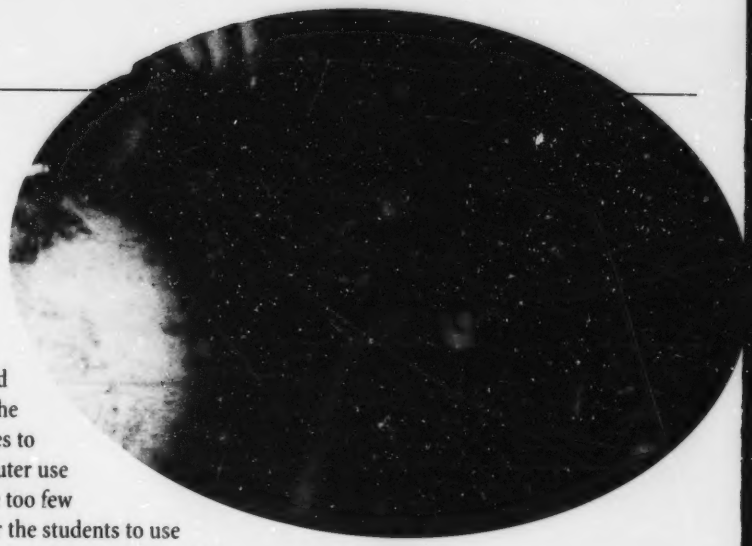
Stability and safety, consistency in one's environment, and feelings of personal security within that environment are of great concern to youth in care. Foster care almost inevitably involves movement from one placement to another, often with changes in schools. Adjusting to these disruptions is difficult, especially during the school year, and particularly if the disruptions happen repeatedly. Teachers who provide support and show understanding of the young person's situation can make a major difference in their lives.

Youth in care are generally not aware of or they have difficulty accessing resources that can assist them in their educational pursuits. Often they are not given the opportunity to be active participants in decisions regarding their schooling. Traditional high school does not appear to work for some youth in care who might benefit from alternative educational programs. Unless youth in care are given choices, they can be left with feelings of despair.

Respectful treatment, motivation and encouragement from a wide range of support people – including teachers, family members, foster parents, principals, police officers, guidance counsellors, social workers, therapists, and friends – could assist youth in care to bridge the gap between their school and personal lives.

Empowerment is a dream of youth in care that is yet to be realized. To be empowered, youth in care need to be prepared for independence and supported while leaving care. They require assistance with financial management, life skills training, and personal management. They need to be encouraged and supported as they learn self-reliance and begin to realize their life goals. ❍

COMPUTER USE IN SCHOOLS



Computer use is widespread in Canadian schools, particularly in the higher grades.

A 1999 survey found that during the first two months of that year, there was one computer in the school system for every seven students at the secondary level, one for every eight intermediate students and one for every nine students in elementary schools.

About one-third of elementary and intermediate students and about half of all secondary students have used e-mail for learning activities such as communications with teachers and participation in group projects. E-mail use during the last school year ranged from about 31% of students in New Brunswick to 65% in Prince Edward Island.

Only 12% of elementary students and 3% of intermediate and secondary students attended a school without Internet access for instructional purposes. In some provinces, such as PEI and New Brunswick, all schools are connected to the Internet.

Mathematics was the subject most likely to be taught using instructional software.

Over three-quarters (76%) of elementary students, 80% of intermediate students and 87% of secondary students have obtained information from websites as part of their school activities. About one in three students have designed or maintained a website.

Most elementary pupils have access to word processing software, encyclopedias on CD-ROM, spreadsheet packages, databases and Internet browsers. Older students often have access to software for graphics, presentations and programming.

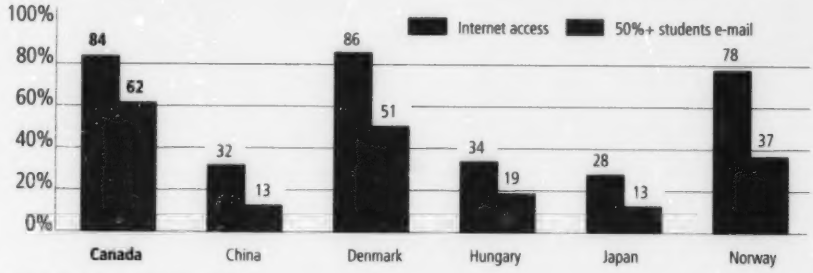
According to school principals and technicians, the main obstacles to greater computer use in schools are too few computers for the students to use and insufficient training opportunities for teachers. Only about 30% of students attend schools where it is mandatory for all teachers to take at least a basic computer-training course. About 79% of students attend schools where a large number of teachers have taken some basic courses, and only 22% attend schools where all teachers have to take regular computer training to stay current.

In the 1999 survey, Canada performed well compared to several other countries in such things as Internet access, computer/student ratios, and teacher training.

Canada also did well in a recent Angus Reid Poll of 10,000 students, aged 12 to 24, from 16 countries. Sweden had the highest level of students able to go on-line at school or at home, and Canada was a close second. ❍

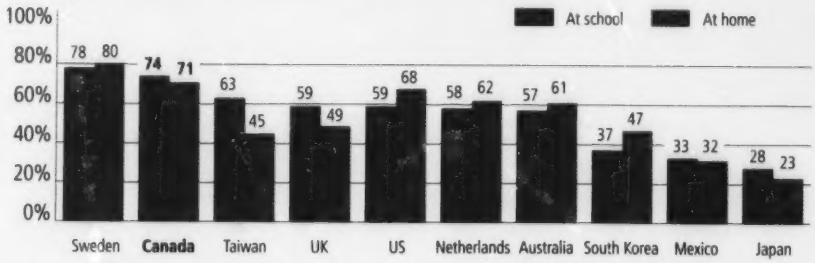
GETTING CONNECTED

Schools with Internet access and those where more than half the students have used e-mail



Source: IEA SITES, Press Release, Module-1.

STUDENTS ON THE 'NET AT SCHOOL OR HOME



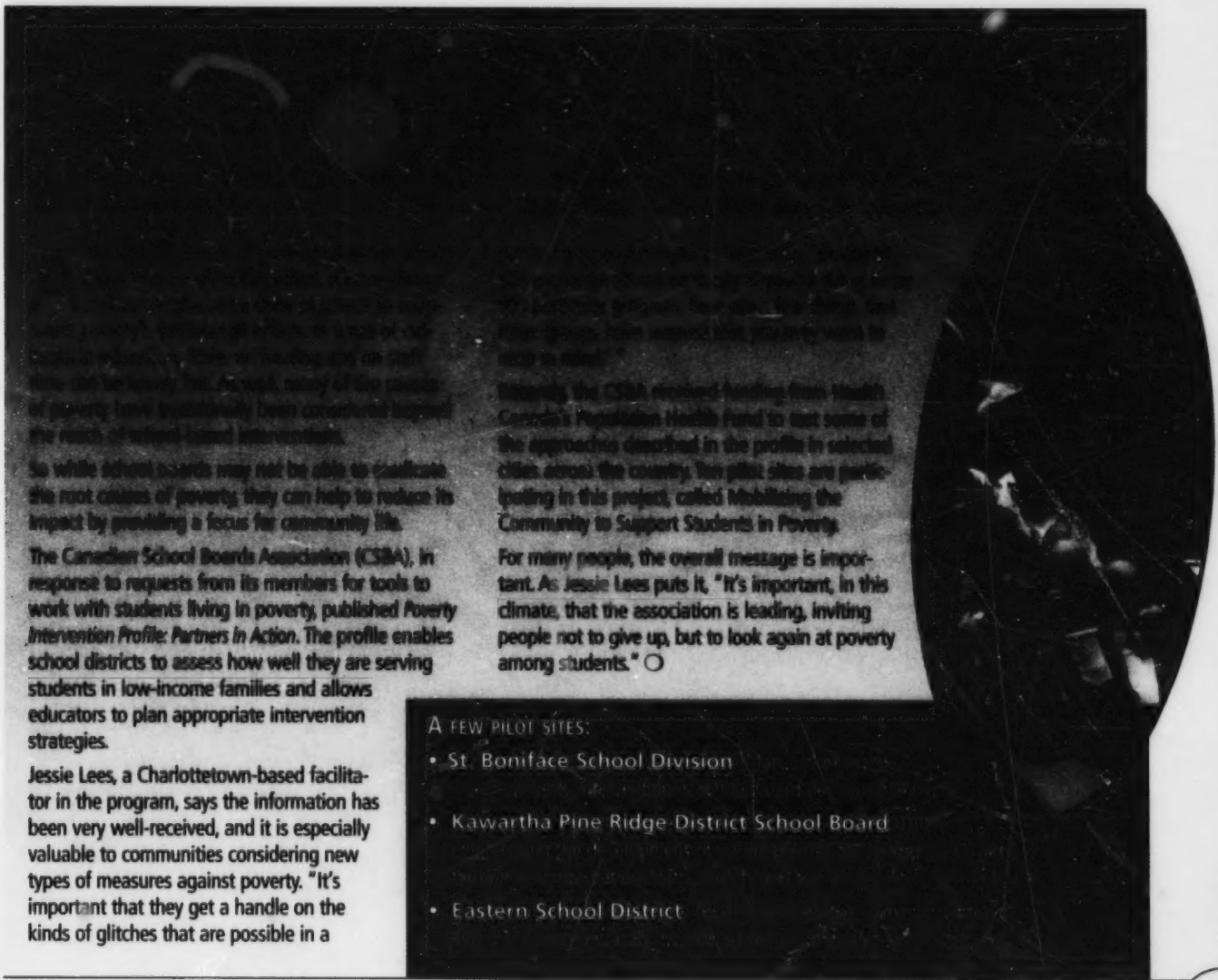
Source: "Canadians at forefront of Web use in schools," in The Globe and Mail, *Sept. 11, 2000, based on an Angus Reid Poll.*

THE EFFECTS OF POOR HOUSING ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Past issues of *Progress* have reported on the increasing proportion of Canadian children who are living in unaffordable or less-than-adequate housing. Recent investigations by the CCSD show that a large number of Canada's children live in poor housing conditions and that these conditions effect their well-being. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) demonstrate a link between the length of exposure to dwelling problems and poorer developmental outcomes.

The great majority of Canada's children are well-housed, predominantly in owner-occupied, single family dwellings. But according to the 1996 Census, 516,000 families with children – 15% of the total – were in "core housing need." Core housing need means that a person's housing is inadequate (that is, in need of major repair), overcrowded, or unaffordable (that is, more than 30% of pre-tax income is spent on dwelling costs) and that alternative housing in the community is not affordable. Core housing need varied by family type, with approximately 9% of couples with children and 45% of lone-parent families being in core housing need in 1996.

NLSCY data from 1994 and 1996 further illuminate the housing problems facing families with children. If we define problem housing as being exposure to either crowded housing or housing



So while school boards may not be able to eradicate the root causes of poverty, they can help to reduce its impact by providing a focus for community life.

The Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), in response to requests from its members for tools to work with students living in poverty, published *Poverty Intervention Profile: Partners in Action*. The profile enables school districts to assess how well they are serving students in low-income families and allows educators to plan appropriate intervention strategies.

Jessie Lees, a Charlottetown-based facilitator in the program, says the information has been very well-received, and it is especially valuable to communities considering new types of measures against poverty. "It's important that they get a handle on the kinds of glitches that are possible in a

Following the CSBA received funding from Health Canada's Population Health Fund to test some of the approaches described in the profile in selected cities across the country. Ten pilot sites are participating in this project, called Mobilizing the Community to Support Students in Poverty.

For many people, the overall message is important. As Jessie Lees puts it, "It's important, in this climate, that the association is leading, inviting people not to give up, but to look again at poverty among students." ○

A FEW PILOT SITES:

- St. Boniface School Division
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Eastern School District

THE EFFECTS OF POOR HOUSING ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Past issues of *Progress* have reported on the increasing proportion of Canadian children who are living in unaffordable or less-than-adequate housing. Recent investigations by the CCSD show that a large number of Canada's children live in poor housing conditions and that these conditions effect their well-being. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) demonstrate a link between the length of exposure to dwelling problems and poorer developmental outcomes.

The great majority of Canada's children are well-housed, predominantly in owner-occupied, single family dwellings. But according to the 1996 Census, 516,000 families with children – 15% of the total – were in "core housing need." Core housing need means that a person's housing is inadequate (that is, in need of major repair), overcrowded, or unaffordable (that is, more than 30% of pre-tax income is spent on dwelling costs) and that alternative housing in the community is not affordable. Core housing need varied by family type, with approximately 9% of couples with children and 45% of lone-parent families being in core housing need in 1996.

NLSCY data from 1994 and 1996 further illuminate the housing problems facing families with children. If we define problem housing as being exposure to either crowded housing or housing

MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY: SCHOOL-BASED APPROACHES TO FIGHT STUDENT POVERTY

"I SEE CHILDREN WHO BELIEVE THEY ARE STUPID BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE COMPUTERS. THEY DON'T HAVE THE EXPERIENCE TO SAY 'I'M SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED.'" *Jessie Lees, Charlottetown*

Although the effects of poverty on school-aged children are well-documented, it's not always obvious what can be done at school to counteract poverty's detrimental effects. In times of cutbacks in education, limits on funding and on staff time can be keenly felt. As well, many of the causes of poverty have traditionally been considered beyond the reach of school-based interventions.

So while school boards may not be able to eradicate the root causes of poverty, they can help to reduce its impact by providing a focus for community life.

The Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), in response to requests from its members for tools to work with students living in poverty, published *Poverty Intervention Profile: Partners in Action*. The profile enables school districts to assess how well they are serving students in low-income families and allows educators to plan appropriate intervention strategies.

Jessie Lees, a Charlottetown-based facilitator in the program, says the information has been very well-received, and it is especially valuable to communities considering new types of measures against poverty. "It's important that they get a handle on the kinds of glitches that are possible in a particular type of program," says Lees. "Essentially, this exchange allows us to say 'If you're going to try this particular program, here are a few things that other groups have learned that you may want to keep in mind.' "

Recently, the CSBA received funding from Health Canada's Population Health Fund to test some of the approaches described in the profile in selected cities across the country. Ten pilot sites are participating in this project, called Mobilizing the Community to Support Students in Poverty.

For many people, the overall message is important. As Jessie Lees puts it, "It's important, in this climate, that the association is leading, inviting people not to give up, but to look again at poverty among students."

A FEW PILOT SITES:

- **St. Boniface School Division** (Man.), working to include poverty intervention in school board decision-making.
- **Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board** (Ont.), emphasizing the development of school policies for children in poverty through communications with parents and the community.
- **Eastern School District** (PEI), a collaborative community breakfast and social program at Birchwood School in Charlottetown.

in need of repair, a significant minority of children (22%) lived in problem housing at least once in 1994 or 1996, and about one in three of these children – 8% of all children – were in poor housing both years.

What effect does living in such housing conditions have on children's well-being? Among children living in problem housing in 1994 or 1996, 49% were in less than excellent health, and the rate was 45% for those exposed to it in both years (compared to 39% of children in non-problem housing). Children who have asthma and are living in problem housing are more likely to report having an asthmatic episode. The gradient for having an asthmatic episode in the previous 12 months (as a percentage of children who have had asthma) rises steadily from 39% for children living in decent housing, to 43% for children who have lived for one year in poor housing, to 47% for those exposed to dwelling problems in both years.

In addition to these negative health outcomes, child development measures from the NLSCY – such as hyperactivity, anxiety and delayed development of infants and young children – demonstrate a negative link with dwelling problems. For example, children living in dwellings with no problems were less likely to be delayed in their motor and social development skills and their language skills (10% and 14%, respectively) than were children with one exposure to dwelling problems (12% and 20%), and much less likely than children exposed to dwelling problems in both 1994 and 1996 (16% and 24%).

Some of the links between housing and poorer health are likely due to other factors associated with poor housing – such as low income. But while housing conditions and family income are intimately related, poor housing and low income are not synonymous. Fortunately, many low-income families with children are adequately housed, including, for example, families who are in a temporary low-income situation and those who benefit from housing supports and subsidies. ❯

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

According to the 1996 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, over one million children aged 6 to 11 – 43% of them – were in some form of child care, and for three-quarters of these children, only one type of child care arrangement was used. One-parent households were only slightly more likely to use child care than were two-parent households (47% versus 43%). However, higher-income households were more likely to use child care (57%, for households with income over $100,000).

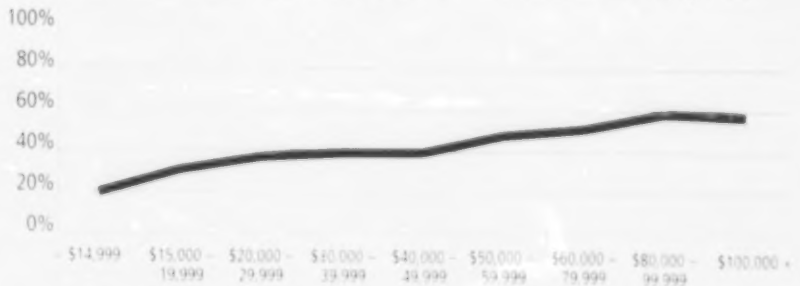
Twenty-eight per cent of the children were cared for in a non-relative's home. Of these, about one in five was in a licensed arrangement; 14% were cared for in their own home by a non-relative; 14% were cared for by a relative in the relative's home; and 9% by a relative in the child's home. About one in 10 children was in a before- or after-school program.

Many children spend at least some time at home by themselves or while looking after a sibling, without parental supervision. In 1996, 17% of children aged 6 to 11 spent at least some time at home alone. Among that group, younger children were less likely to spend time at home alone – about 2% of children aged 6 to 8 did so, 11% of 9-year-olds, 29% of 10-year-olds, and 46% of 11-year-olds.

Eighteen per cent of children aged 6 to 11 from two-parent households and 15% from one-parent households looked after themselves occasionally. The gender of the child made no difference to the rates.

Sometimes children aged 12 or 13 look after a sibling at home without their parent(s). Among 12- and 13-year-olds with siblings, 40% spent no time looking after a brother or sister, 32% spent less than one hour, and 28% spent an hour or more each day. Twelve per cent of girls and 5% of boys aged 12 and 13 spent three or more hours each day caring for a sibling. ❯

CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 11 IN CHILD CARE, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1996



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1996.

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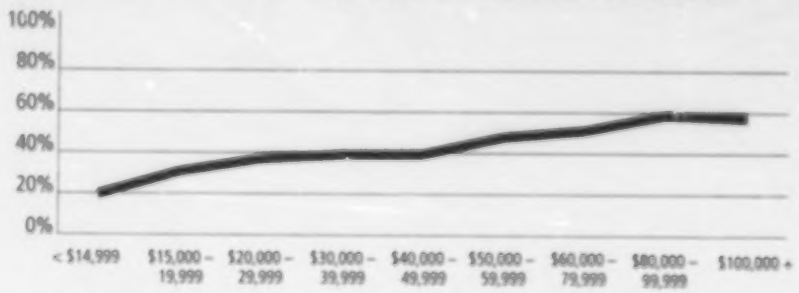

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1996.

Civic Vitality

Civic vitality refers to the strength of social networks within a community, region, province and country. It is reflected in the presence of institutions, organizations and informal practices that people create to share resources and build attachments with others.

Child- and Youth-friendly Cities

Are there opportunities for today's children and youth to have a voice in civic affairs? Do they have a sense of ownership of their communities?

Three years ago, the CCSD set out to find answers to these questions by surveying 33 cities and municipalities ranging in size from 50,000 to well over 1 million people. The results of our first child- and youth-friendly survey were not overly encouraging – less than half of the 19 cities responding indicated that there were opportunities for some level of civic involvement.

By 1998, however, the picture had brightened. The CCSD again surveyed 33 cities, and of the 21 that responded, 16 were encouraging young people to participate in civic life by offering vehicles such as youth advisory committees, roundtable discussions, and youth programs.

Now, two years later, we wanted to see if the encouraging results from the 1998 survey were the sign of a new trend. As in 1998, this year's survey asked questions about the political involvement of young people in their communities. It was sent to 33 cities and municipalities ranging in size from 9,000 people to more than four million.

So, has two years made a difference in the levels of civic participation by children and youth? It seems so. Of the 24 cities that responded to this year's survey, 20 reported that they provide opportunities for young people to participate in civic life. That's four more than in 1998. And the news is even better: 10 cities have established youth advisory councils to the mayor – three more than in 1998.

Child- and youth-friendly initiatives vary from city to city, both in terms of the types of activities and the levels of direct involvement in civic affairs. Child Friendly Calgary is a program that *Progress* reported on in its very first issue. The city of Calgary continues to excel in the variety and frequency of opportunities available to its young people to participate in the affairs of their community.

Created in 1993, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council in Calgary has three focus areas: research, communications, and events. Since its inception, the Council has been involved in many initiatives, including providing a youth perspective on neighbourhood safety issues and the development of a long-term transportation plan for the city. More recently, the Urban Society of Aboriginal Youth was asked by the mayor to serve as an advisory council on issues specific to Calgary's Aboriginal youth.

Calgary also boasts many other programs geared towards involving or soliciting input from Calgary's youth. Among them are Youth Week – a week dedicated to

celebrating and recognizing the accomplishments of youth and the importance of their roles in the community – and the Corporate Youth Strategy – a process to help build the capacities of city departments to work harmoniously with one another and with the community, and to build a common vision of services to youth.

Other cities with youth advisory councils or other initiatives underway to increase the involvement of young people in their civic affairs include Regina, St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver and Chicoutimi.

In Regina, for example, youth and youth-serving agencies sit on various issue-specific committees (such as vehicle theft or prostitution). Young people

CHILD & YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

City/Town	City/Town Council Representative	Youth Advisory Council to Mayor	Other Civic Involvement			Website
			Youth Representatives on Committees or Boards	Consultations & Task Forces	Special Events & Programs	
Calgary		•	•	•	•	•
Cambridge					•	
Chicoutimi		•				
Edmonton		•	•		•	•
Inuvik	•		•			
Moncton				•		•
Nepean		•				•
Oshawa					•	
Prince George			•	•	•	
Québec				•		•
Regina			•	•	•	•
Saint John				•	•	
St. John's		• (pending)		•	•	
Thunder Bay		•	•			•
Toronto		•	•	•	•	•
Vancouver		•	•			•
Waterloo		•			•	
Whitehorse				•		
Windsor			•	•		
Yellowknife		•		•		

Note: 20 of 24 respondents
Source: CCSD, Child- and Youth-Friendly Cities Survey, 2000.

are also involved in the Regina Crime Prevention Commission and they make regular presentations to a Community Services Committee.

Chicoutimi's Conseil Jeunesse advises the city on the needs and concerns of youth in their community and promotes the participation of young people in decision-making processes.

The city of Vancouver has a Civic Youth Core Committee which combines youth and departmental representatives, while the city of Toronto has a Youth Cabinet working with a Youth Advocate to ensure that youth issues and input are brought to the attention of City Council. The Toronto Youth Cabinet also educates youth across the city on the importance of civic engagement.

Youth representatives on a Youth Task Force in St. John's recently identified advisory committees to the mayor as an important way for youth to be heard. The goal of the Task Force is to formulate a plan to guide the city in developing a more supportive environment for youth development.

Inuvik was the only city that reported having a youth representative on its town council. Youth are elected to council, and they report on youth concerns in the community as well as initiatives underway. The youth representative is also responsible for maintaining contact and sharing information with other young people in the community.

This year's survey results are particularly encouraging and reflect a growing interest in ensuring that the voices of young people are heard in cities across Canada. By creating avenues for youth input into civic affairs, cities are also establishing ways by which we can ensure that young people today feel – and remain – connected to their communities. The result is likely to be communities that care about young people and truly meet their needs. ❍

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THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITIES ON CHILDREN'S RECREATION

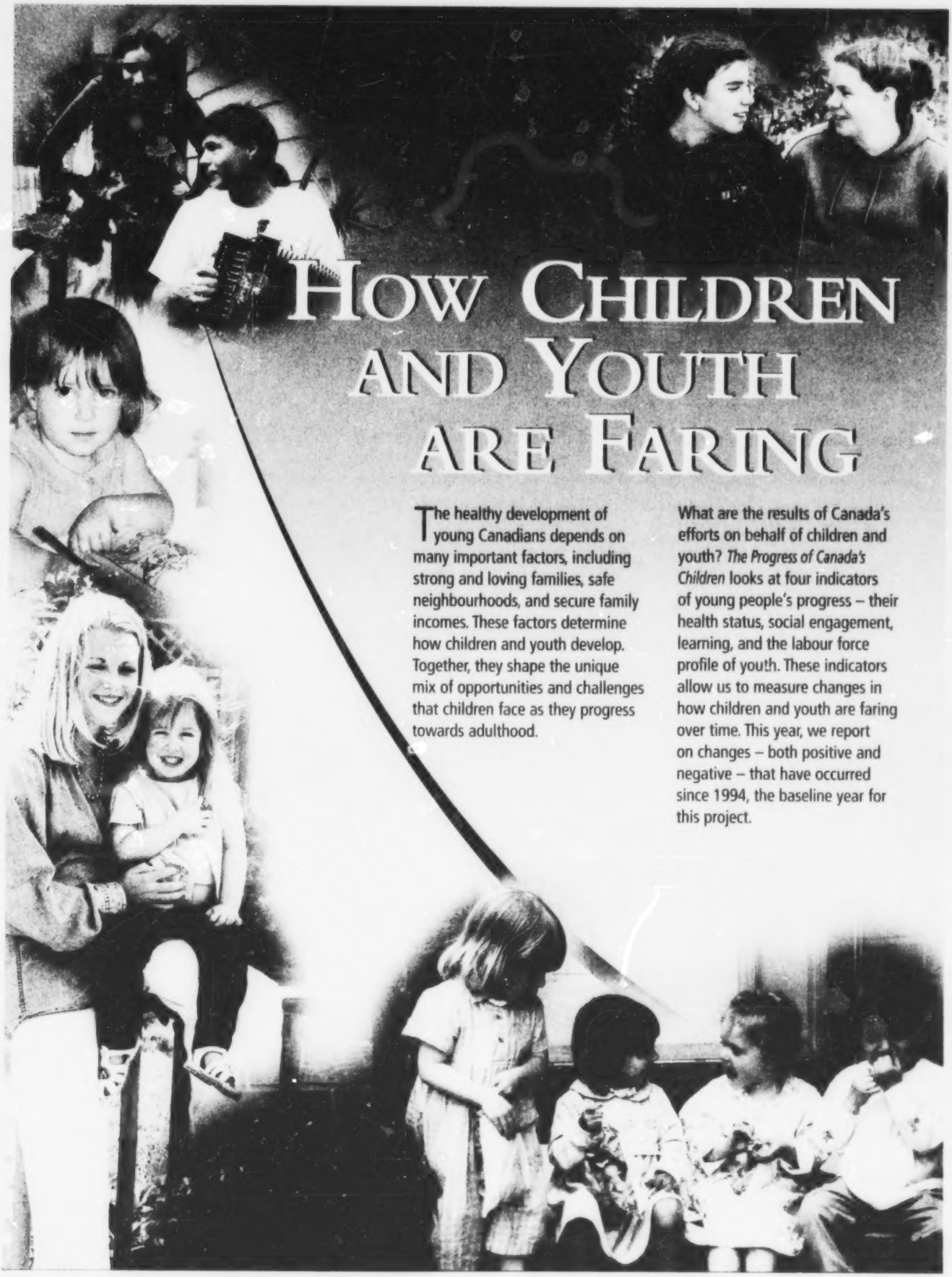
Participation in recreational activities like sports contributes to the healthy development of children and enriches their lives. In 1994, over one-third of children aged 4 to 11 "almost never" participated in supervised sports. A new study sheds some light on the effect that a community can have on participation in such activities.

Research has shown that children from economically disadvantaged homes tend to have reduced rates of participation in recreation. Researchers Dan Offord, Ellen Lipman and Eric Duku from The Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk used data from the NLSCY to examine the impact of poverty and neighbourhood characteristics on participation.

They found the strongest predictor of children's participation in supervised sports was income level, which was identified using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs). Over 60% of children from very poor homes "almost never" participated in supervised sports, compared to 27% of their counterparts from well-off homes. According to the authors, constraints on participation include the relatively high cost of supervised sports, the lack of adult involvement, and the absence of recreational facilities in poorer neighbourhoods.

To test the theory that civic communities encourage sports, each community was rated on a seven-point scale to determine its level of "civic-ness." Factors included whether it was safe for children to play outside during the day, whether there were adults in the community the children could look up to, and whether adults watched out for the children's safety. Seventy-two per cent of children living in civic communities had participated in supervised sports over the previous year, leaving a full 28% of children who had "almost never" participated. However, the rate of non-participation for communities characterized as "non-civic" was 42%!

It would seem that poor children living in a good, civic community are more apt to engage in supervised sports than children living with a double disadvantage: being poor and living in a less civic community. Good communities can lessen the harmful effects of being poor, and they can help increase children's opportunities to reap the benefits of participation. ❍



How Children and Youth are Faring

The healthy development of young Canadians depends on many important factors, including strong and loving families, safe neighbourhoods, and secure family incomes. These factors determine how children and youth develop. Together, they shape the unique mix of opportunities and challenges that children face as they progress towards adulthood.

What are the results of Canada's efforts on behalf of children and youth? *The Progress of Canada's Children* looks at four indicators of young people's progress – their health status, social engagement, learning, and the labour force profile of youth. These indicators allow us to measure changes in how children and youth are faring over time. This year, we report on changes – both positive and negative – that have occurred since 1994, the baseline year for this project.

HEALTH STATUS

Health status refers to the capacity of people to achieve optimal well-being. It includes physical, social and emotional health, as well as physical and social risks to well-being.

THE HEALTH OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

How healthy are school-aged children? From the standpoint of physical health, school-aged children are faring well, although there are still too many injuries and respiratory illnesses continue to rise. However, the emotional health of this age group is causing growing concern among child health experts.

DEATH RATES

If we examine death rates – the crudest indicator of "ill-health" – we see that school-aged children fare better than other children. Their death rates are substantially lower than those of younger children and those of teens and young adults. For all age groups, death rates have declined over the decade.

INJURIES

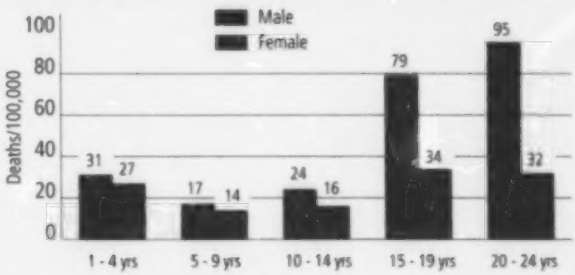
Injuries are the leading cause of death among school-aged children. In 1997, 261 children aged 5 to 14 died as a result of injuries. Injuries accounted for 36% of all deaths among children aged 5 to 9 and for 37% of all deaths among those aged 10 to 14. Injury death rates declined somewhat over the 1990s, but there are still too many injuries.

Injuries are also a leading cause of hospitalizations. They accounted for 15% of all hospitalizations for children aged 5 to 9 and 18% of all hospitalizations in the 10 to14 age group. Boys are more likely than girls to die or be hospitalized as a result of injuries.

There are many more injuries than those that result in hospitalization. According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), 10% of children aged 6 to 11 (or 246,000 children) in 1996 had had an injury in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to 12% in 1994. Boys were more likely than girls to be injured – 12% of boys were injured in 1996, compared with 9% of girls; in 1994, the corresponding figures were 13% and 11%. Overall, the likelihood of injury is greater for older children. In 1996, 15% of 11-year-olds and 18% of 13-year-olds had an injury during the previous year, compared to 9% of 6-year-olds.

Fortunately, most children aged 6 to 11 who had injured themselves had done so only once. For example, 88% had only one injury in 1996 (83% in 1994). In both survey years, the most common types of injuries reported were cuts, scrapes, or bruises (36% in 1996, 33% in 1994), followed by broken or fractured bones (26% in 1996, 30% in 1994).

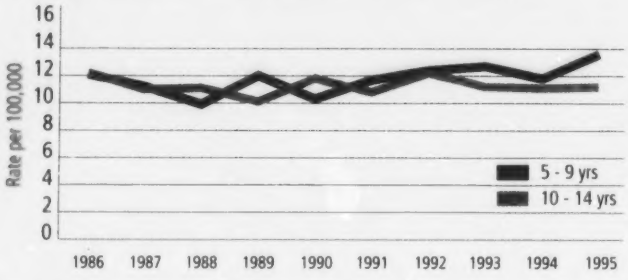
MORTALITY RATES BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP, 1997



Source: Health Canada, Leading Causes of Death and Hospitalization in Canada, *Population and Public Health Branch, 2000.*

CANCER AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN, 1986 TO 1995, CANADA

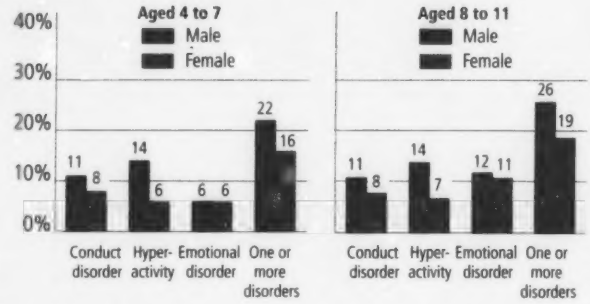
Age-standardized incidence rate, both sexes, all cancer sites



Source: Calculations by the CCSD using data from "Cancer Surveillance On-line," Health Canada, Population and Public Health Branch.

FREQUENCY OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS, CHILDREN AGED 4 TO 11, 1994/95

by gender



Source: DR Offord and EL Lipman, "Emotional and Behavioural Problems," in Growing Up in Canada, *Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 1996.*

Most injuries resulted from a fall (excluding falls from bicycles or from sports). In 1996, falls accounted for 40% of injuries, down slightly from 1994 (42%). Sports-related injuries accounted for 27% of all injuries in 1996 and 25% in 1994. About one in four injuries occurred at school (26% in 1996, 23% in 1994). Injuries were also likely to take place outside the home (21% in 1996, 22% in 1994).

Respiratory illness

Respiratory illness is the leading cause of hospitalizations among children aged 5 to 9 and the second leading cause (after injuries) among children aged 10 to 14. Of all hospitalizations in the 5 to 9 age group, 29% are due to respiratory illness; in the 10 to 14 age group, 17% are due to respiratory illness.

According to the 1996 NLSCY, asthma rates were up slightly from 1994. In 1996, 14% of children aged 5 to 9, 16% of 10- and 11-year-olds, and 15% of 12- and 13-year-olds had had asthma. The longer term trend is up substantially. Canadian surveys have reported that asthma rates among children and youth under age 20 jumped from 2% in 1978 to over 12% in 1996. Air quality – both indoors and outdoors – seems to be contributing to a higher burden of illness from asthma and allergies. According to Health Canada, 26% of students aged 5 to 19 with asthma reported that wood fumes triggered an asthma attack. Other triggers included outdoor air pollution (32%), mold or mildew (33%), and tobacco smoke (55%).

Cancer

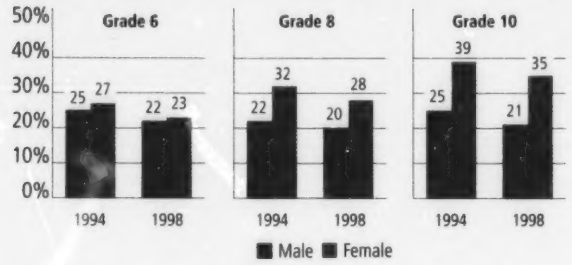
While there have been significant improvements in treating childhood cancers over the last few decades, cancer is still the second leading cause of death among school-aged children – accounting for 108 deaths in 1997. With improvements in treatments, the cancer mortality rate has declined from 3.2 per 100,000 in 1990 to 2.8 in 1997 for children aged 5 to 9, and from 3.4 to 2.5 per 100,000 for children aged 10 to 14. And survival rates for Canadian children with cancer have improved significantly – more than two-thirds of children diagnosed with cancer are likely to survive for at least 10 years. However, the incidence of cancer did not drop between 1986 and 1995: currently, more than 450 children aged 5 to 14 develop cancer each year.

Mental health

The Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH), in their report *The Health of Canada's Children*, has labelled mental illness as the "new morbidity" for children. And school-aged children are particularly implicated in this diagnosis.

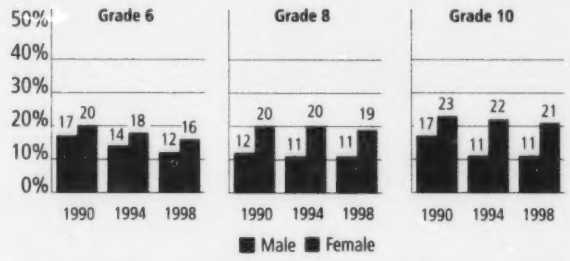
According to parental reports from the NLSCY, approximately one in 10 children exhibited behaviour consistent with a hyperactivity disorder, a conduct disorder or an emotional disorder. Older children (aged 8 to 11) were more likely to have an emotional disorder than were younger children (aged 4 to 7). Gender is an important

STUDENTS WHO FELT DEPRESSED ONCE A WEEK OR MORE OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King. Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, *Health Canada, 1999.*

STUDENTS WHO "VERY OFTEN" OR "RATHER OFTEN" FELT LONELY



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King. Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, *Health Canada, 1999.*

determinant of mental health. Approximately one in four boys was identified with one or more problems, compared to less than one in five girls. Boys were twice as likely as girls to be identified as hyperactive and 1.4 times as likely to have a conduct disorder.

According to IMS HEALTH as reported in *The Health of Canada's Children*, the number of Ritalin pills dispensed in Canada more than doubled between 1994 and 1998 – from 26.8 million in 1994, to 45.4 million in 1996, and 56.2 million by 1998. Ritalin is the medication most commonly given to children who are diagnosed with hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

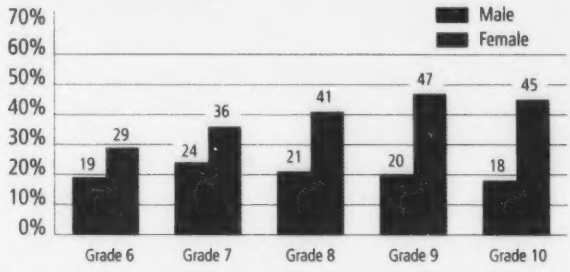
According to the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey, in 1998, the proportion of youth who felt "very happy" with their life declined sharply between Grades 6 (52%) and 10 (30%). About one-quarter of all respondents indicated that they had felt depressed once a week or more over the previous six months.

Again, gender is an issue. Girls are more likely than boys to have felt depressed, with the differences becoming greater as they get older. While girls showed a steady and substantial increase from Grade 6 to Grade 10, there was very little difference in the proportion of boys who experienced depression from Grade to Grade. By Grade 10, over one-third of the girls and one-fifth of the boys indicated that they felt depressed at least once a week.

Girls also scored lower than boys on measures of self-confidence, decision-making and self-acceptance, and nearly twice as many girls as boys said they often feel lonely. Fortunately, the proportion of young people who often feel lonely has declined slightly over the 1990s.

Self-esteem is a strong marker of the mental health and well-being of children and youth. According to the National Population Health Survey, a majority of youth reported moderate to high self-esteem. However, school-aged children are less likely than older Canadians to have high self-esteem – 36% of 12- to 14-year-olds and 41% of 15- to 17-year-olds did, compared with over 45% of Canadians aged 20 and older.

STUDENTS WHO WERE ON A DIET OR FELT THEY NEEDED TO LOSE WEIGHT, 1998



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King. Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, *Health Canada, 1999.*

BODY IMAGE

Body image problems show up in the pre-teen years. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey found that between one-third and three-quarters of students in Grades 6, 8 and 10 felt there was something about their body they would like to change. Girls in all groups were more likely than boys to feel this way. For both sexes, the proportion who were dissatisfied with their physical appearance increased with age and leveled off in Grades 9 and 10, where about half the males and three-quarters of the females wanted to alter at least one aspect of their appearance.

When asked to rate their satisfaction with their body size, more males than females felt that their body was about right. Males in the higher grades were as likely to feel too thin as too fat. Females who were unhappy with their weight most often felt they were over-weight. For both sexes, satisfaction with body size declined steadily from Grades 6 to 9 and leveled off between Grades 9 and 10. There was no appreciable change between 1994 and 1998.

Young people who develop unhealthy eating practices due to distorted perceptions of body weight are at an increased risk of developing nutritional deficiencies. The health behaviour survey showed that in 1998, almost half of Grade 10 girls were either on a diet or felt that they needed to lose weight. ❍

Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is an important contributor to the health and well-being of children and youth. Daily exercise builds cardiovascular endurance, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, and the practice may continue as a valuable habit into adulthood. How physically active are school-aged children and how do they compare with older youth?

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute says that the majority of school-aged children – three out of five children aged 5 to 17 – are not active enough for optimal growth and development and Canadian children become less active as they get older. According to the Institute's 1998 Physical Activity Monitor, only 43% of children aged 5 to 12 and 33% of teens aged 13 to 17 are considered to be active enough for optimal health benefits.

Furthermore, recent research has shown that an increasing proportion of Canadian children are overweight. Among boys aged 7 to 13, the proportion who are overweight rose from 15% in 1981 to 29% by 1996, and among girls it rose from 15% to 24%.

How much exercise are children getting?

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study found that from one-half to three-quarters of girls and three-quarters or more of boys in Grades 6, 8 and 10 exercised twice a week or more in 1998. This exercise was done in their free time, outside of school hours, and lasted until they were out of breath or sweating. Boys were more likely than girls to exercise twice a week or more – the gender differences varied from 8% in Grade 6 to 25% by Grade 10.

Between 1990 and 1998, there was a consistent decline in how often school-aged children exercised. In all three Grades, smaller proportions of boys exercised twice a week or more in 1998 than in 1990. This was also true for girls in Grades 6 and 8.

The study found that physical activity declined as children got older, and the National Population Health Survey has confirmed this trend. In 1996 and 1998, roughly 75% of young people between the ages of 12 and 14 rated their overall physical activity as "frequent," compared to 70% of those aged 15 to 19, and roughly two-thirds of those aged 20 to 24.

Participation varies by income

Participation in physical activity varies according to income. Young people in lower-income households are less likely to be physically active than their upper-income peers, and this difference seems to be increasing over time.

According to the National Population Health Survey, there were greater differences in participation rates for sports activities – such as home exercises and winter or summer sports – between

Mortality by income

Over the last 25 years we have seen a dramatic decline in rates of death among children. Between 1971 and 1996, the death rate – from all causes – for children aged 1 to 14 living in urban centres declined from 40 per 100,000 to 17 per 100,000.

However, not all children are at equal risk. In 1996, the poorest 20% of children living in urban centres had a death rate 1.7 times that of the most affluent 20% of children. Since 1971, children in Canada's highest-income families have had a lower death rate than those in the lowest-income families.

If the death rate among all children aged 1 to 14 were the same as the rate among children in the highest-income group – that is, if we could eliminate the impact of income disparity – how many fewer lives would be lost? In 1971, the answer was 953 children! By 1996, the answer was 258, about one-quarter of what it would have been in 1971. Over that period, Canada closed the gap caused by inequality (called "excess deaths" in the table on the right) substantially. However, it should be noted that all of the reduction in inequality occurred between 1971 and 1986, rather than during the decade 1986-1996.

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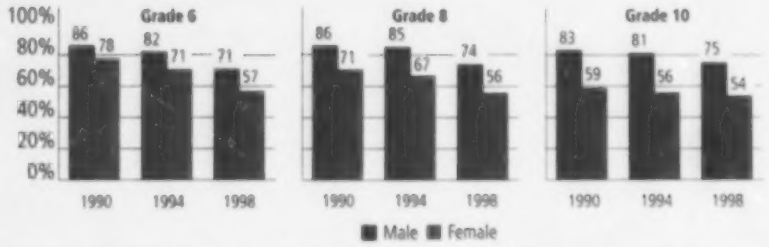
This participation gap also widened for winter sports like hockey, skating and skiing, from 12.5% in 1996 to 23.7% by 1998. For summer sports (such as swimming, cycling, ball-playing), the gap grew from 14.3% in 1996 to 29.4% in 1998. In both years, greater proportions of youth living in poorer households reported that their overall physical activity was infrequent. ❍

STUDENTS EXERCISING TWICE A WEEK OR MORE OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS, BY GENDER, 1990 TO 1998



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King, Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, *Health Canada, 1999.*

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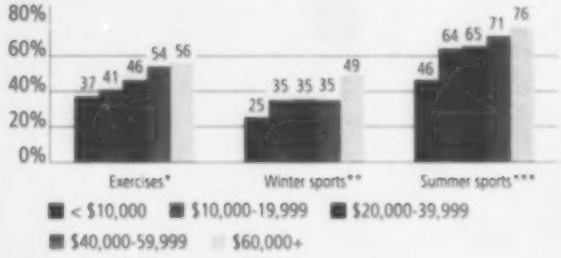
Youth aged 12 - 24 yrs



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INJURY DEATHS

Injuries are the leading cause of death for children in this age group, and deaths from injuries have declined. Between 1971 and 1996, the death rate due to injuries for children aged 1 to 14 in urban centres declined from 18 per 100,000 to 6 per 100,000.

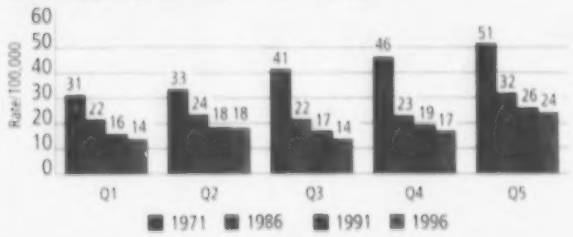
Once again, children in the lowest-income families are more likely to die as a result of injuries than are children in the highest-income families. In 1996, children in the lowest-income group were 1.3 times more likely to die as a result of an injury than were those in the highest-income group. If the injury death rate were the same for all children as it was for children from the wealthiest households, Canada would have lost 749 fewer children in 1971 and 82 fewer children in 1996. Once again, all of this reduction in inequality occurred from 1971 to 1986, rather than from 1986 to 1996. ❍

NUMBER OF "EXCESS DEATHS" FOR CHILDREN AGED 1 TO 14, 1971-1996

	All causes	Injury deaths
1971	953	749
1986	163	43
1991	258	41
1996	258	82

Source: Special tabulations from the Urban Canada Mortality by Income Study, produced by R Wilkins, Social and Economic Studies Division, Statistics Canada, October 2000.

DEATH RATES (ALL CAUSES) FOR CHILDREN AGED 1 TO 14, 1971-1996 **By income quintile, urban Canada**



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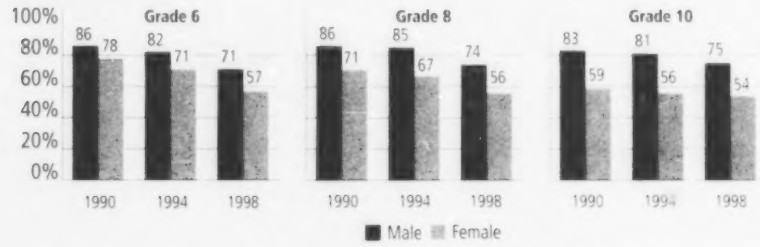

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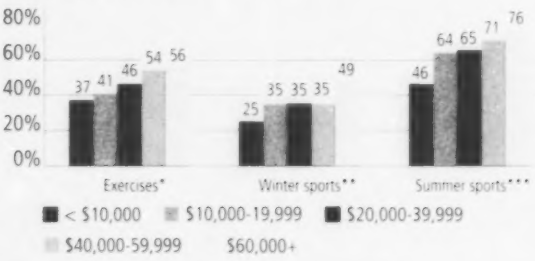

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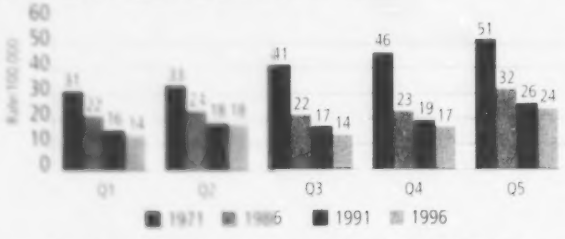

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TEENS, YOUNG ADULTS AND STRESS

Teenagers and young adults are stressed about balancing the demands of jobs, school and personal life, and these feelings of time pressure are getting worse.

A survey among young people aged 15 to 24 on perception of time shows that "time crunch" – defined as answering "Yes" to 7 of 10 questions on perception of time – is higher among post-secondary students than among high school students, and higher again among employed youth.

Female students and young women aged 18 to 24 working full-time are the most likely to feel highly time-stressed, and the stress is increasing substantially. Between 1992 and 1998, the proportion of employed females who said they were highly stressed rose by 64% (from 17% to 28%). Females in all categories were more likely than males to respond affirmatively to the time stress questions. Female students aged 15 to 17 were almost twice as likely as their male peers to consider themselves to be workaholics. Female students aged 18 to 24 were most likely to feel that they had not accomplished what they had set out to do by the end of the day. ›

TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS FEELING TIME-STRESSED

Source: Statistics Canada, As Time Goes By: Time Use of Canadians, 2000 and Canadian Social Trends, Winter 2000, Statistics Canada Cat. No. 11-008-XPE, Canadian Council on Social Development.

PERCEPTIONS OF TIME AMONG YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24, 1992 & 1998

	Male						Female					
	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998	1992	1998
	15-17 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Employed		15-17 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Employed	
Per cent responding "Yes"												
At the end of the day, do you often feel you have not accomplished what you set out to do?	35	41	49	46	39	34	48	52	60	63	43	52
Do you worry that you don't spend enough time with your family or friends?	21	29	31	39	31	55	46	44	42	49	41	58
Do you feel you are constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than you can handle?	28	33	40	42	30	35	47	46	47	57	41	52
Do you feel that you just don't have time for fun anymore?	15	19*	30	22*	24	30	32	33	25	35	32	53
Do you often feel under stress when you don't have enough time?	47	59*	62	60	54	52	56	69	64	80	60	65

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CHILD HUNGER PERSISTS

Two years ago, *Progress* reported that according to the NLSCY, 57,000 Canadian children aged 2 to 11 went hungry at least once in 1994. This accounted for 1.5% of all children. In 1996, even more children were hungry – 62,000 or 1.6%.

And many of these children went hungry often: 22% of the 62,000 children were hungry at least once a month.

Children in one-parent households were far more likely to have experienced hunger. In 1996, 4.6% of children in one-parent families went hungry, compared with 1.0% of children in two-parent families. In 1994, the gap was even wider: 5.7% of children from single-parent families went hungry, compared with less than 1% of children from two-parent families.

For families in which children experienced hunger, the most common response was for the parent or guardian (usually the mother) to skip meals or to eat less. This was the case in 36% of households in 1996 (38% in 1994).

The number of Canadians using food banks continues to rise. In March 2000, 726,902 Canadians used food banks, up from 716,912 a year earlier. Since 1989, the number of people using food banks has increased by 92%. Since 1997, the number has increased by almost 10%. And children continue to be over-represented at food banks across Canada. Children under age 18 account for just over one-quarter of the Canadian population, but they now account for 39% of food bank recipients. ›

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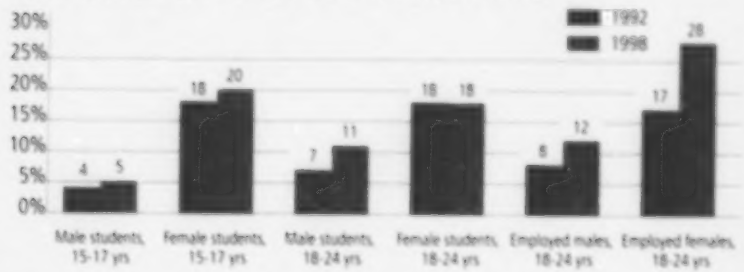
TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS FEELING TIME-STRESSED



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PERCEPTIONS OF TIME AMONG YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24, 1992 & 1998

Per cent responding "Yes"	Male						Female					
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	15-17 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Employed		15-17 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Students		18-24 yrs Employed	
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Do you worry that you don't spend enough time with your family or friends?	21	29	31	39	31	53	46	44	40	39	41	58
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SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social engagement refers to relationships or involvements – both positive and negative – with other family members, peers, community members, local institutions, and at the broadest level, with society.

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships matter – both in the family and beyond it. The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) asked children and parents about family relationships and friendships. Overall, the response was pretty positive.

MOST YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE GOOD FRIENDS

When it comes to making friends, parents said that 27% of their children aged 8 and 9 are "somewhat shy," 36% are "about average," and 37% are "very outgoing." Almost half the children aged 6 to 9 had two or three good friends, 29% had four or five good friends, and only 10% had one friend or no friends at all. This finding was true for both boys and girls.

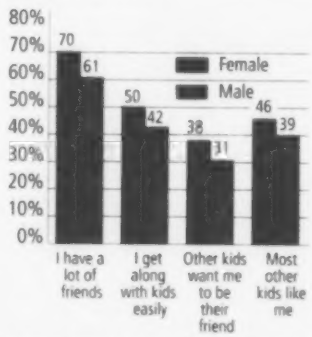
Parents reported that 59% of children aged 4 to 9 got along very well with other kids and 29% got along quite well. They also reported that 26% of children aged 4 to 9 got along "very well" with their siblings, 35% got along "quite well" and 34% got along "pretty well." Only 6% did not get along with their brothers and sisters.

DO OTHER KIDS LIKE ME?

Friendships become even more important as children get older. Here are the results of four questions on peer relationships that the NLSCY asked of children aged 10 to 13.

- Most young people feel they have many friends. Two-thirds (66%) of the children said the following statement was true: "I have a lot of friends." Another 24% felt it was mostly true, and only 11% felt that it was sometimes true or mostly false.
- About half feel they get along well with their peers. Forty-six per cent answered true to the statement: "I get along with kids easily," another 36% said it was mostly true, and only 18% said it was sometimes true or mostly false.
- Fewer young people feel positive about how their peers think of them. About one-third (35%) felt the statement, "Other kids want me to be their friend" was true, another 31% felt it was mostly true, and 34% felt it was sometimes true or mostly false.

FRIENDS
Children aged 10 to 13, by gender, who answered "true" to these statements, 1996

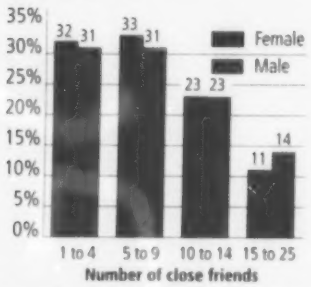


Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

- Approximately four in 10 (43%) answered true to the statement, "Most other kids like me," and 34% said it was mostly true. About one-quarter (23%) said it was sometimes true or mostly false.

The 12- and 13-year-olds were more likely than the 10- and 11-year-olds to feel that most of those statements were true. The only exception was the third question,

CLOSE FRIENDS
Among children aged 10 and 11, by gender, 1996



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to which virtually equal proportions of children at all ages said that other kids wanted to be their friend.

Girls were more likely than boys to have positive responses about their relationships with peers. A higher proportion of girls than boys answered true to all of the statements.

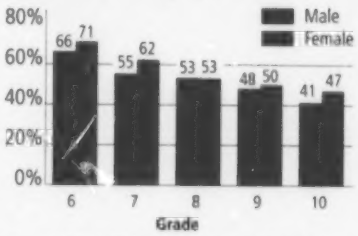
There were also differences across the country. While there were some variations within regions, there was a general downward trend from east to west. That is, more children in Atlantic Canada answered positively about having lots of friends, getting along and being liked than did children on the West Coast.

Young people living in lower-income households were slightly more likely to answer positively about their relationships with their peers than those in higher-income households. There was one exception, however – poorer children were less likely than richer children to feel that the statement "Most other kids like me" was true.

Most older children have close friends too

The vast majority of pre-teens and young teens report having close friends. One-third of boys and girls aged 10 and 11 reported having one to four close friends in 1996. Among 12- and 13-year-olds, approximately one in five girls and boys reported having one to four close friends of the same sex, and a further 40% of girls and 33% of boys reported having five to nine close friends.

MY TEACHERS ARE INTERESTED IN ME AS A PERSON
by Grade level and gender, 1998



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King. Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children. *Health Canada, 1999.*

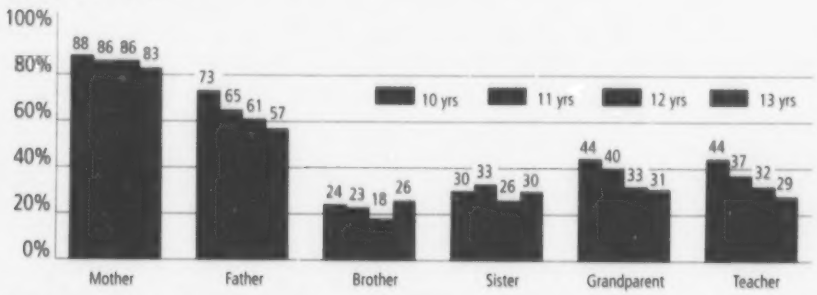
Comparative data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study showed a decline in the proportion of children in Grades 6 and 8 with fewer than two close friends. In 1990, nearly one in five girls in Grade 8 reported having fewer than two close friends, but by 1998, the proportion was only one in 14.

When the NLSCY asked children aged 10 to 13 if they could talk to someone other than their friends about problems, 92% said yes. Virtually the same proportion of girls and boys answered yes. However, it was higher for 10-year-olds (96%) than for 13-year-olds (90%). The person they were most likely to talk to was their mother (86%). There were some differences across ages. Older children were less likely to talk to their mothers, fathers and teachers.

When asked how they got along with friends and family, young people were more likely to report that they got along very well with their mothers and fathers than with their friends and siblings. Ten-year-olds were more likely to get along with all of these people than were 13-year-olds.

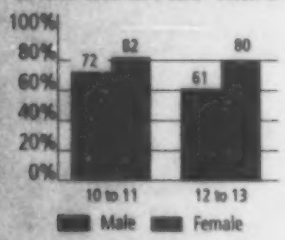
What about their teachers? The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study asked students in Grades 6 through 10 if they thought their teachers were interested in them as a person. The proportion who agreed declined with age, and it was higher among girls than boys at all ages. Internationally, Canada rates lower on this score than a number of European countries. ❍

BESIDES MY FRIENDS, WHEN I HAVE A PROBLEM I TALK TO...
by age of child, 1996



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

I'LL HELP SOMEONE WHO'S HURT
Children aged 10 to 11 in 1994 and 12 to 13 in 1996 who said "often or very true"



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 & 1996.

Most children aged 10 to11 in 1994 (85%) and those aged 12 to 13 in 1996 (85%) responded "never" or "not true" to the statement, "I physically attack people." Yet this happened at least sometimes for nearly 15% of children. It is more common among boys than girls. For example, in 1996, 8% of girls aged 12 to 13 said they physically attack others at least sometimes, compared to 22% of boys at this age.

The vast majority of children (87% of the 10 to 11 age group in 1994 and 85% of the 12 to 13 age group in 1996) deny that they are ever "cruel, bully or mean to others." Again, negative behaviour is more common among boys than girls. In 1996, 18% of boys aged 12 to 13 said they were cruel, bullied, or mean to others at least sometimes, compared to 12% of girls.

About one in five children in both survey years were identified by their parents as often being solitary. This corresponds to the figures given by the children –18% of children aged 10 to 11 in 1994 and 19% of those aged 12 to 13 in 1996.

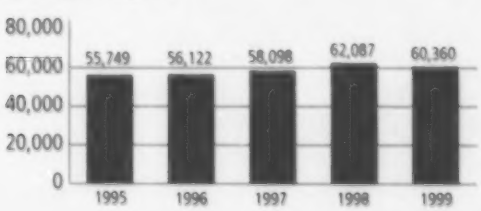
Part of growing up is learning to have compassion and respect for others. According to both parents and children, girls were more likely than boys to help someone who had been hurt. But while parents felt that helping behaviour improved as children got older, children reported the opposite. ❍

CANADA'S MISSING CHILDREN

There were 60,360 missing children under 18 in Canada in 1999. The number of reported cases of runaways and abducted children is higher than it was in 1995, despite a decrease of almost 2,000 between 1998 and 1999.

Runaways account for 78% of all missing children and youth in Canada. Of the 47,585 runaways in 1999, more than three-quarters (77.5%) were aged 14 or older. More than half (58%) were girls. ❍

MISSING CHILDREN IN CANADA, 1995 TO 1999
children under 18 years



Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1999 Annual Report on Canada's Missing Children, 2000.

BULLYING

All school-aged children should feel safe in their schools and neighbourhoods. Most Canadian children feel secure, but it is troubling how many don't and how many act aggressively towards others.

Parental reports of fighting and bullying among boys and girls declined somewhat from 1994 to 1996, according to the NLSCY. But in both survey years, around one-third of parents said their sons aged 6 to 11 sometimes or often got into "many fights." Parents were more likely to say that their sons were involved in aggressive or bullying behaviour than their daughters.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Parents said their child aged 6 to 11 sometimes or often...

	1994		1996	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gets into many fights	36%	28%	34%	27%
Is cruel, bullies, or is mean to people	13%	9%	13%	8%
Physically attacks people	19%	10%	18%	9%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 & 1996.

Children were asked whether they felt safe or were bullied at school or going to and from school. In 1994, 54% of children aged 10 and 11 said they felt safe at school "all of the time," while 60% felt safe enroute. In 1996, among children aged 12 and 13, the percentages were somewhat higher – 55% felt safe at school and 66% felt safe enroute. But 11% of children aged 10 to 11 in 1994 and 8% of the 12 to 13 age group in 1996 admitted to being bullied in school at least "some of the time." A higher percentage of boys than girls reported being bullied in school: 14% of boys aged 10 to 11 compared to 8% of girls in 1994.

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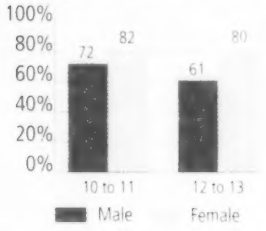
Children aged 10 to 11 in 1994 and 12 to 13 in 1996 who said often or very true



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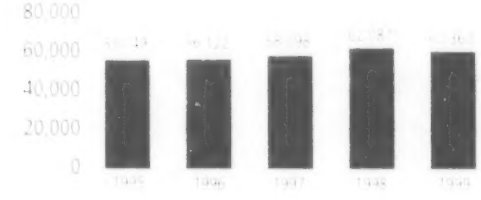

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Risk and Relationships

Children living in high-risk circumstances at home get support from their relationships with other people. Having strong relationships with siblings, close friends and teachers helps children in highly stressful environments to cope with the difficulties they face, according to research by Jenny Jenkins and Daniel Keating.

There are a number of factors that can put children at risk of emotional, behavioural and academic problems. These include living with one or two parents who abuse alcohol, are unhappy in their marriage, or are depressed, children living with a learning disability, living in low income, living with hostile parent-child relationships, and divorce.

A child's vulnerability depends largely on how many of these risks exist. Children not exposed to any risks have a rate of psychiatric problems around 10%. The rate for children exposed to four or more of these risks is about 50% – a five-fold increase.

Although children exposed to multiple risks in their lives are at much greater risk of problems, the presence of good relationships in their lives can protect them. Good relationships with siblings, friends and teachers can reduce their vulnerability to that of children in low-risk environments. In low-risk circumstances, these relationships have much less of an impact on a child's problems.

The number of good relationships a child has is strongly related to their resilience, and older children need more relationships than do younger children. For 6-year-olds, having one good relationship is enough to moderate the impact of risk. For 10-year-olds, this is not the case: children in high-risk circumstances who have only one good relationship are more at risk than children with two or three good relationships.

Boys are less likely than girls to have these good relationships. Boys may start with more problem behaviours than girls – such as showing higher levels of activity, aggressive play, and the like – thus making it harder for people to respond affectionately to them. Less protection provided by close relationships may, in turn, make it harder for boys to feel confident and untroubled. ❯

Youth Crime is Declining

Despite the widespread impression that youth crime is growing, Canada's youth crime rate has actually been declining for several years.

The rate of young people charged with Criminal Code offences has been dropping since 1992. Between 1998 and 1999, it fell by 7%, with declines in all categories: violent crime (-4%), property crime (-11%) and other Criminal Code offences (-3%). Since 1994, the youth crime rate has dropped by 20%.

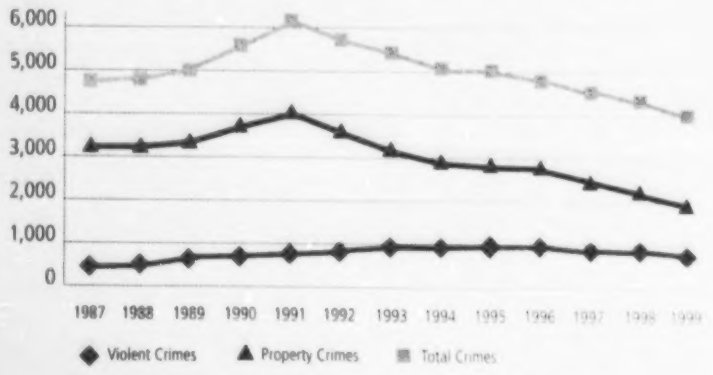
Among youth, 21% of the crimes were for violent offences, compared to 30% among adults. And violent crime for both genders declined in 1999 – by 5% for young men and by 6% for young women. Over the last decade, the charge rate for violent crimes by young women has increased by 81%, compared to a 30% increase for young men, but the number of females charged with all types of crime is still significantly lower than for males.

Property crimes accounted for almost half (49%) of all youth crime. In 1999, the rate of youth charged with property crimes declined by 11%, the 8th consecutive year the rate has fallen. And the youth charge rate dropped for all property offences, including breaking and entering (-16%), motor vehicle theft (-11%) and other theft (-10%).

The rate of youth "not charged"* also dropped in 1999, by 7%. In total, the rate of youth "not charged" was more than 2,400 per 100,000 youth, corresponding to a ratio of two youth not charged for every three youth who were charged.

In 1998/99, youth court heard 106,665 cases and of these, 67% resulted in convictions. Young offenders aged 12 to 17 who were convicted in youth court were put in some form of custody in one-third of the cases, while 48% of the cases resulted in probation. In 33,173 cases, the young offenders agreed to participate in alternative measures programs, a participation level similar to that of 1997/98. In 22% of the cases, the youth agreed to perform community services, 17% involved the youth apologizing, and 11% had youth participating in social skills improvement programs. ❯

YOUTH CRIME RATES IN CANADA, 1987 TO 1999
Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Sylvain Tremblay, "Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999," in Juristat, *Vol 20, No 5.*

** The youth crime rate is actually the youth charge rate – that is, the number of youth charged with a Criminal Code offence. The rate of youth charged is not a perfect indicator of youth crime because youth dealt with by other means, such as alternative measures, are not included in the youth charged statistics. It is therefore important to also include the rate of youth "not charged."*

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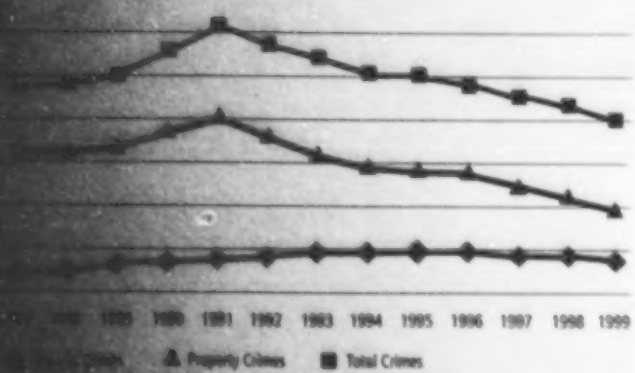

...Statistics in Canada, 1999," in Juristat, Vol 20, No.5.

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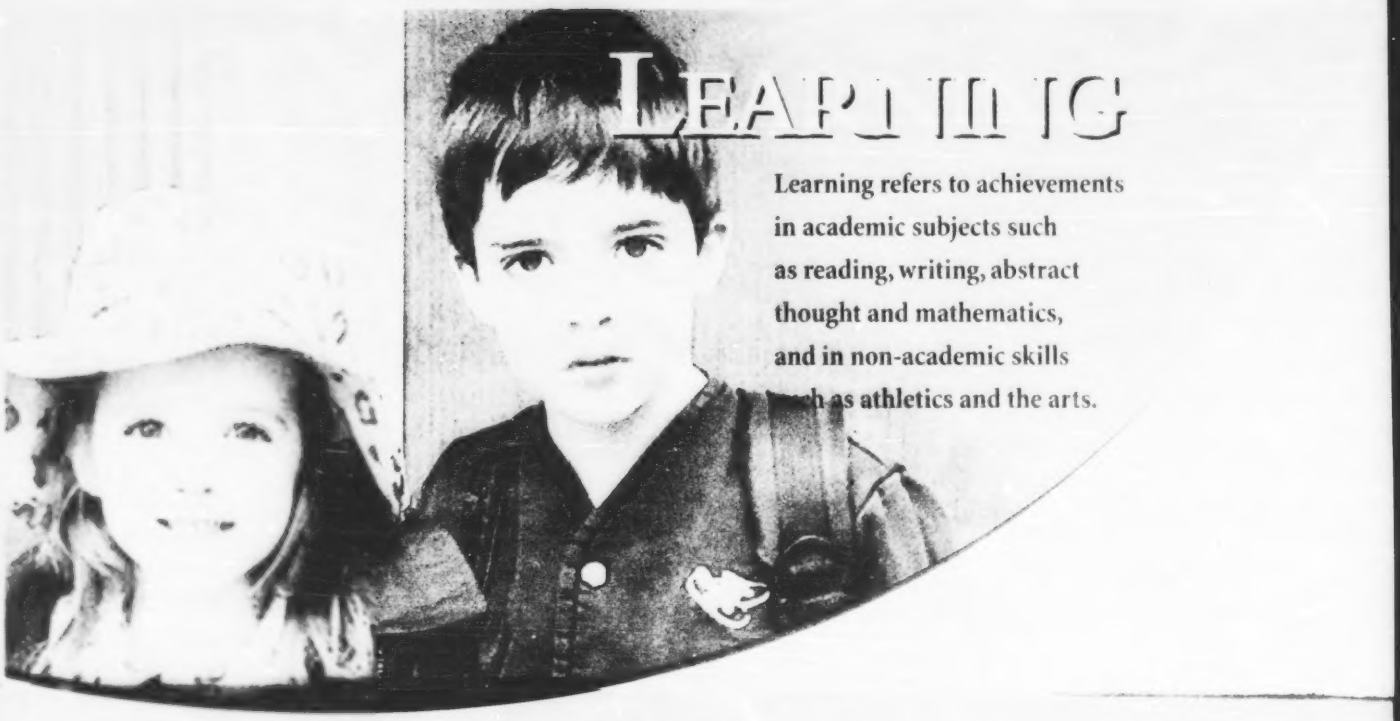


LEARNING

Learning refers to achievements in academic subjects such as reading, writing, abstract thought and mathematics, and in non-academic skills such as athletics and the arts.

LEARNING AND SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

School is a big part of children's lives, and learning is vitally important to their development. How are they doing in school? Do they like it? How do their parents and teachers think they are doing? What educational goals do families have?

MOST CHILDREN LIKE SCHOOL, BUT ...

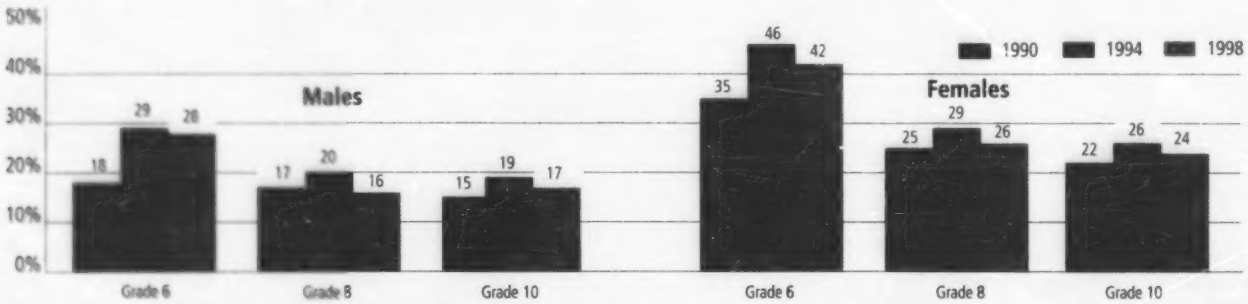
The majority of Canadian children feel positive about school, but these feelings decline as they get a little older. According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), one in three children aged 10 to 11 in 1994 liked school "very much." Two years later, in 1996, about one in five children aged 12 to13 said they liked school to the same extent. Similar proportions (37%) liked school "quite a bit." Older children were more likely to "not like/hate" school, or like it just a "bit" (53%) than were younger children (31%).

The survey on Health Behaviour in School-aged Children also found that student satisfaction with school declined with age. Far more girls than boys were satisfied with school at each age level.

WHAT SUBJECTS DO THEY LIKE?

The NLSCY asked children about their interests in various subjects. In 1996, boys aged 10 and 11 were more likely to express interest in mathematics (55%) than were girls (45%). These proportions were up slightly from 1994, when they were 53% for boys and 41% for girls. By age 12 and 13, children are less positive overall about the subject, and the gender difference remained. Boys aged 12 and 13 in 1996 were more apt to say that they liked science and gym/physEd than were girls, while girls liked English and French more (see chart, next page).

STUDENTS WHO LIKED SCHOOL "A LOT"

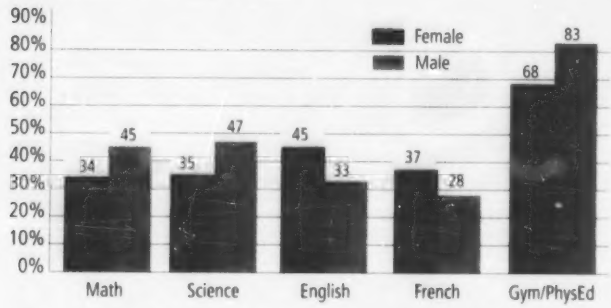


Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King, *Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children*, Health Canada, *1999*.

Good grades matter

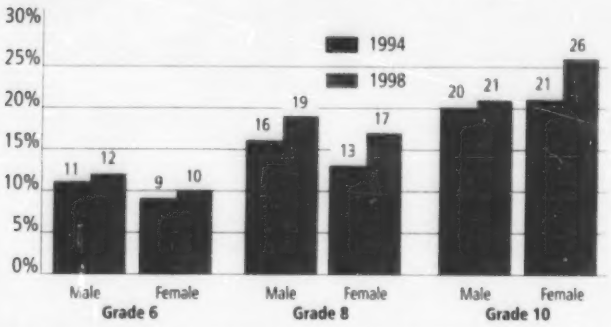
The majority of students think it is important to get good grades, but this decreases with age. In 1994, 68% of children aged 10 to11 said good grades were very important, compared to 56% of children aged 12 to13 in 1996. In 1996, 69% of 10-year-olds and 51% of 13-year-olds felt that good grades were very important. However, according to the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey, it is older students who feel a lot of pressure because of their schoolwork. And these feelings have increased in recent years.

SCHOOL SUBJECTS KIDS LIKE "A LOT," 1996
Students aged 12 to 13, by gender



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

FEELING A LOT OF PRESSURE FROM SCHOOL WORK



Source: AJC King, WF Boyce, and MA King, *Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children*, Health Canada, *1999.*

Parental attitudes

The importance that parents attach to education tends to affect their children's attitudes. In 1996, 60% of parents of children aged 8 to 11 said that good school grades were very important, up from 57% of parents in 1994. And 88% of children aged 10 to 13 in 1996 indicated that their parents encouraged them to do well at school. Only 8% of children this age said their parents expected too much of them at school.

Reading and math scores

As part of the NLSCY, children were tested in math and reading, starting in Grade 2. In 1996, for children aged 6 to 13, the average number of correct scores on the math test was 8.7 on 15 questions. Of 20 questions in the reading test, the average was 10.4 correct scores. Girls did slightly better than [illegible] on the reading test (10.7 compared to [illegible] worse on the math test (8.6 for girls [illegible]).

Hopes for the future

The majority of parents (72%) of children aged 6 to 13 in 1996 hoped that their children would go to university, but fewer teachers had this expectation. When asked if their students (aged 6 to 13) would obtain a university degree, 44% of the teachers agreed. When the young people themselves were asked, over half of those aged 12 and 13 indicated that they intended to get a degree (56%).

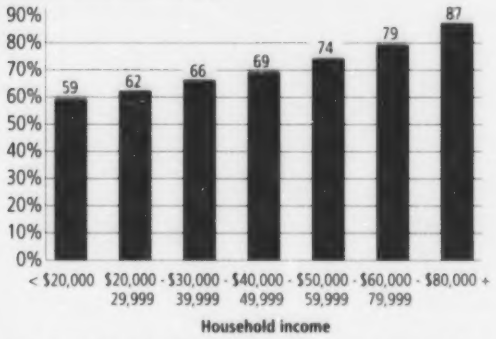
Expectations were greater for girls – 58% of girls aged 12 to13 set university as a goal for themselves, compared to 54% of boys. Among parents, expectations for daughters exceeded those for sons (74% compared to 70%). Teachers also had higher expectations for girls (47%) than for boys (40%).

Household income affects families' hopes. Like their parents, children from higher-income families were more likely to want to get a university degree. Half of children aged 12 and 13 in families with incomes of less than $20,000 per year hoped that they would go to university, compared to 71% of those in families with incomes over $80,000. The expectations of teachers followed a similar trend.

How are children doing?

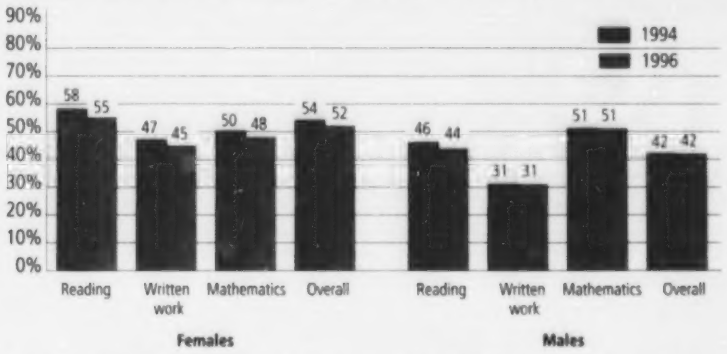
The NLSCY asked parents, teachers and students the following question: How well are children doing in school? Overall, parents tended to report that girls were doing better than boys. In 1996, 52% of parents of girls reported that their daughters were doing "very well" in school compared to 42% of parents of boys. The percentage of children (aged 6 to 11) reported by their parents to be doing "very well" in reading declined somewhat between 1994 and 1996 for both girls and boys.

I HOPE MY CHILD (AGED 6 TO 13) WILL GO TO UNIVERSITY
by household income, 1996



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996.

MY CHILDREN (AGED 6 TO 11) ARE DOING "VERY WELL" IN SCHOOL

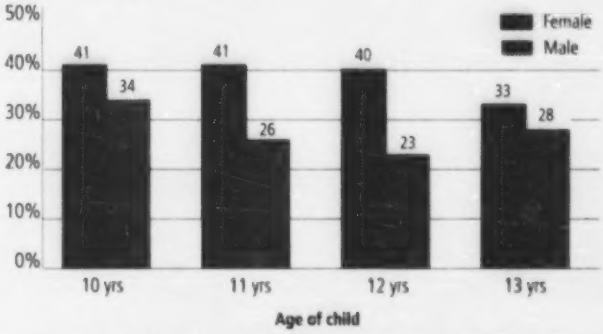


Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 & 1996.

In terms of overall ability, teachers were also more likely to rate girls higher: 27% of teachers of girls aged 6 to 13 rated them near the top of the class compared to 18% of boys. Girls tended to be rated near the top in their written ability (28%), reading (31%), and non-written communications (26%). The corresponding figures for boys were 15%, 21%, and 16%. In math and sciences, the gender difference was smaller, but still evident: teachers rated 28% of girls near the top of the class in math, compared to 26% of boys, and they rated 26% of girls and 21% of boys near the top of the class in science.

Girls themselves were also more likely than boys to report that they were doing very well in school. In 1996, 39% of girls aged 10 to 13 said they were doing "very well" in school, compared to 28% of boys. Younger children were more likely than older students to report that they were doing very well. ❍

I'M DOING "VERY WELL" IN SCHOOL
by child's age and gender, 1996



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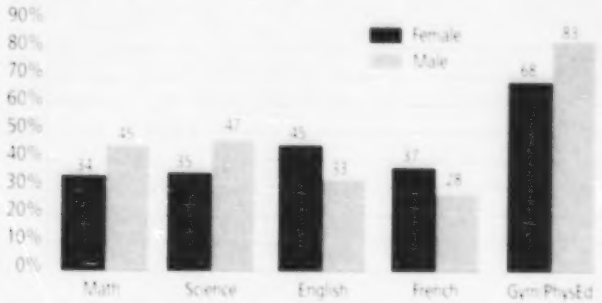
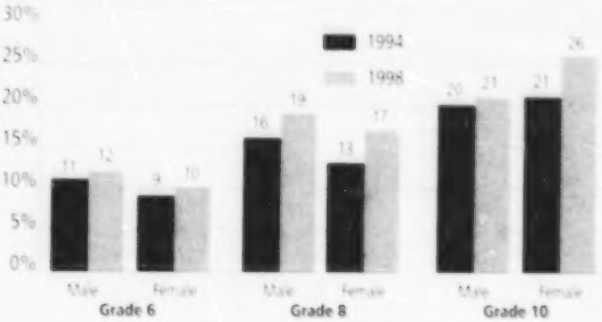


Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada, NLSCY, 1996.

FEELING A LOT OF PRESSURE FROM SCHOOL WORK



Source: M. King, W. Boyce, and M. King, *Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children*, Health Canada, 1999.

Parental attitudes

The importance that parents attach to education tends to affect their children's attitudes. In 1996, 60% of parents of children aged 8 to 11 said that good school grades were very important, up from 57% of parents in 1994. And 88% of children aged 10 to 13 in 1996 indicated that their parents encouraged them to do well at school. Only 8% of children this age said their parents expected too much of them at school.

Reading and math scores

As part of the NLSCY, children were tested in math and reading, starting in Grade 2. In 1996, for children aged 6 to 13, the average number of correct scores on the math test was 8.7 on 15 questions. Of 20 questions in the reading test, the average was 10.4 correct scores. Girls did slightly better than boys on the reading test (10.7 compared to 10.1) and slightly worse on the math test (8.6 for girls and 8.8 for boys).

Hopes for the future

The majority of parents (72%) of children aged 6 to 13 in 1996 hoped that their children would go to university, but fewer teachers had this expectation. When asked if their students (aged 6 to 13) would obtain a university degree, 44% of the teachers agreed. When the young people themselves were asked, over half of those aged 12 and 13 indicated that they intended to get a degree (56%).

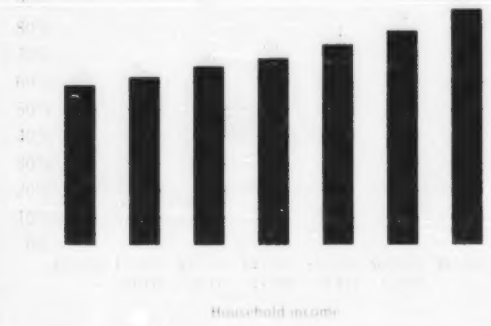
Expectations were greater for girls – 58% of girls aged 12 to13 set university as a goal for themselves, compared to 54% of boys. Among parents, expectations for daughters exceeded those for sons (74% compared to 70%). Teachers also had higher expectations for girls (47%) than for boys (40%).

Household income affects families' hopes. Like their parents, children from higher-income families were more likely to want to get a university degree. Half of children aged 12 and 13 in families with incomes of less than $20,000 per year hoped that they would go to university, compared to 71% of those in families with incomes over $80,000. The expectations of teachers followed a similar trend.

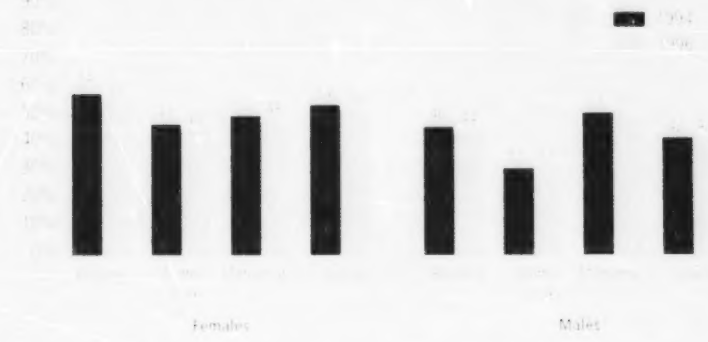
How are children doing?

The NLSCY asked parents, teachers and students the following question: How well are children doing in school? Overall, parents tended to report that girls were doing better than boys. In 1996, 52% of parents of girls reported that their daughters were doing "very well" in school compared to 42% of parents of boys. The percentage of children (aged 6 to 11) reported by their parents to be doing "very well" in reading declined somewhat between 1994 and 1996 for both girls and boys.

I HOPE MY CHILD (AGED 6 TO 13) WILL GO TO UNIVERSITY
by household income, 1996



MY CHILDREN (AGED 6 TO 11) ARE DOING "VERY WELL" IN SCHOOL



In terms of overall ability, teachers were also more likely to rate girls higher: 27% of teachers of girls aged 6 to 13 rated them near the top of the class compared to 18% of boys. Girls tended to be rated near the top in their written ability (28%), reading (31%), and non-written communications (26%). The corresponding figures for boys were 15%, 21%, and 16%. In math and sciences, the gender difference was smaller, but still evident: teachers rated 28% of girls near the top of the class in math, compared to 26% of boys, and they rated 26% of girls and 21% of boys near the top of the class in science.

Girls themselves were also more likely than boys to report that they were doing very well in school. In 1996, 39% of girls aged 10 to 13 said they were doing "very well" in school, compared to 28% of boys. Younger children were more likely than older students to report that they were doing very well. »

I'M DOING "VERY WELL" IN SCHOOL
by child's age and gender, 1996

HOMEWORK@HOME

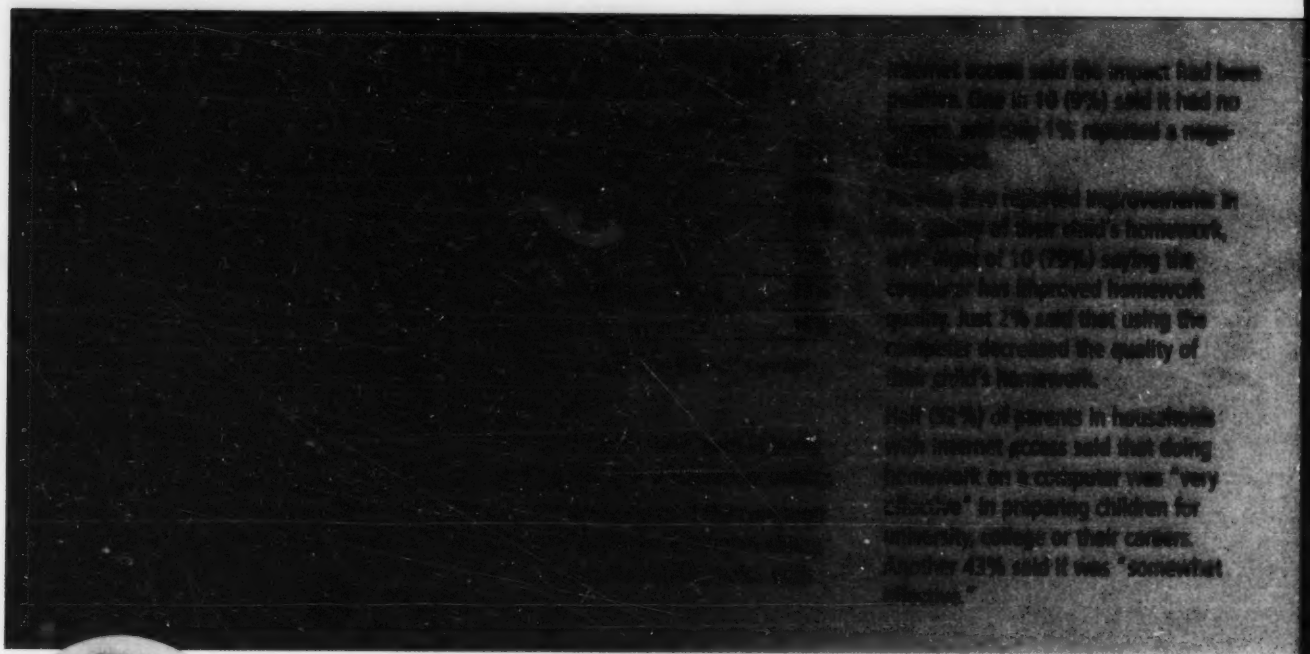
"What's a typewriter?" asks Zach, a 14-year-old, hearing an unfamiliar word in his parents' conversation. His parents are floored. How could their son not have even *heard* of a typewriter? Has it really been that long since they disappeared? They try to describe a kind of mechanical word processor, without much success. "No problem," says Zach, "I'll look it up on the Internet later."

Canada's "Nintendo generation" is in its teens. Intel's Homework Survey, tracking computer use in Canadian households with Internet access in which there is at least one teen between 12 and 17, confirms that Zach is no exception for his age group, a group quite at ease in the "wired" world.

HOMEWORK TIME IS UP IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INTERNET ACCESS

The study, carried out by Angus Reid Group, shows that teens in households with Internet access spend an average of eight hours a week on their homework, an increase of one hour from the 1998 average. Much of this increase may be due to an increase in time spent using the computer (three hours per week).

(continued on next page)



Science Learning Improves

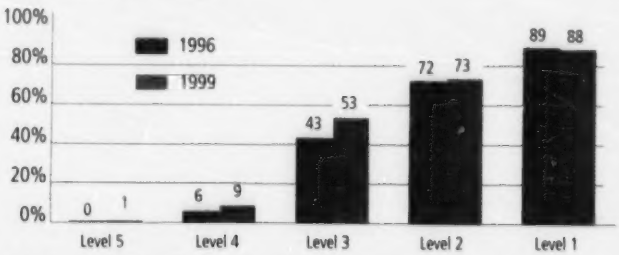
In 1999, the Council of Ministers of Education tested 31,000 students aged 13 and 16 (a random sample of all students) from across Canada on their knowledge of science concepts and skills, and their ability to apply these skills in a practical way to the world around them. The students were measured against five levels of achievement, ranging from elementary school science (Level 1) to advanced secondary science (Level 5). This set of tests is known as the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP).

Results show that, for Canada as a whole, performance at higher levels improved significantly between 1996 and 1999. More than 50% of the 13-year-olds tested scored at Level 3 or above on the written test, compared with 43% of 13-year-olds who took the test in 1996. More than 76% of 16-year-olds who wrote the same test scored at Level 3 or above, compared with 69% in 1996.

Both age groups also showed improvements in a practical test of their knowledge. Almost 50% of 13-year-olds scored at or above Level 3, compared to about 42% in 1996. For 16-year-olds, 76% achieved Level 3 or above on the practical test, compared to about 69% in 1996.

Given that 13-year-olds and 16-year-olds take the same test, the SAIP designers thought that the largest proportion of the younger group would be at Level 2 and that the largest proportion of the older group would be at Level 3. However, a sizeable percentage of the 13-year-olds reached Level 4 and above, and a fairly large proportion of the 16-year-olds in some provinces reached Level 5, demonstrating sophisticated abilities.

13-YEAR-OLDS' SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE
written test, 1996 & 1999



Source: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Science Learning: The Canadian Context: SAIP School Achievement Indicators Program, *1999.*

COMPUTERS VERSUS "THE THREE RS"

A majority of parents (75%) felt that learning about computers was as important as the "Three Rs" (reading, writing and arithmetic), with another 8% saying it was more important. One-quarter of the children (24%) said that learning to use computers was even *more* important than the "Three Rs," with 60% saying it was as important.

COMPUTER ACCESS LINKED TO INCOME

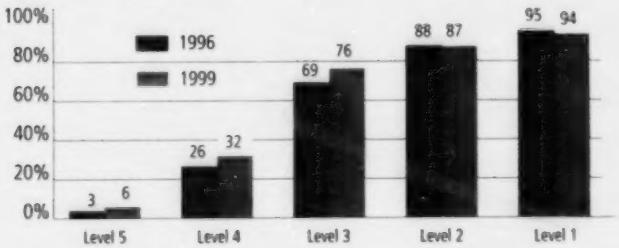
There is concern, however, that poor children are being left behind in this rush to technology, because access to a computer in the home is linked to family income.

In 1998, 74% of Canadian households in the highest income group had computers, compared to only 18% of households in the lowest income group. In other words, the 20% of households with the highest incomes were four times more likely to have a computer than households in the lowest income group. Internet access from home was six times more common for households in the highest income group (48%) than for those in the lowest income group (8%). ❍

Homework helping websites suggested by Stephen MacKinnon, winner of the 1999 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, and Marjan Galavac, author of *The Busy Educator's Guide to the World Wide Web*

www.stemnet.nf.ca/curriculum
www.yahooligans.com
www.studyweb.com
www.homeworkcentral.com
www.ala.org/ICONN/kidsconn.html
www.encyclopedia.com
www.encarta.msn.com

16-YEAR-OLDS' SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE
written test, 1996 & 1999



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In 1999, for both 13- and 16-year-olds, there was little significant difference in achievement on the written test between male and female students. On the practical test, more 13-year-old girls than boys reached Levels 4 and 5.

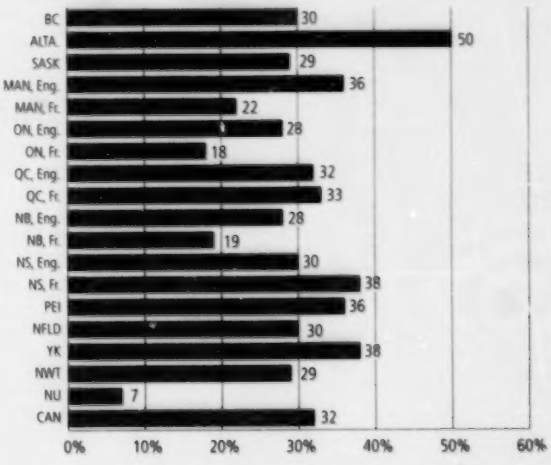
Achievements varied by province or territory. Alberta students in both age groups scored roughly 10% higher than the Canadian average on the written test. Sixty-five per cent of Alberta's 13-year-olds scored at Level 3 or above, compared to 48% of English students in Ontario, 57% of French students in Quebec, and 58% of students in B.C. Half of Alberta's 16-year-olds scored at Level 4 or above, well above all other provinces.

More than half of the 16-year-olds said they are planning to pursue a career in science and technology. Among specific fields within science and technology, the health field was the most widely chosen, averaging around 25%. It was followed by pure sciences, engineering and computer sciences, and technology, at approximately 20% each.

The vast majority of English students – 87% or more in every province/territory – said that science is an important school subject. A smaller proportion of francophone students felt the same way – 54% in Quebec, 61% in Ontario, 60% in Manitoba, and 63% in New Brunswick.

Asked if they believe that science is more difficult than other school subjects, about half the students generally agreed, with 16-year-olds more likely to agree than 13-year-olds. ❍

16-YEAR-OLDS AT LEVEL 4 OR ABOVE, BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY, 1999 Science, written test



Source: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Science Learning: The Canadian Context: SAIP School Achievement Indicators Program, *1999.*

On average, these teens spent two hours each week on the Internet gathering information for school assignments.

Teenage girls and boys also spend an average of 13 hours a week on the Internet on activities not related to school, either "surfing" for information not related to their assignments (six hours a week) or for "entertainment" (seven hours per week). Teenage boys spend more time per week than teenage girls – one hour more surfing and about two hours more on entertainment.

Parents see educational benefits

A majority of parents in the survey (57%) said they bought their home computer for educational purposes. Most felt the impact had been positive, both in terms of learning ability and homework quality.

When asked what impact the computer has had on their child's learning ability, nine of 10 parents in households with Internet access said the impact had been positive. One in 10 (9%) said it had no impact, and only 1% reported a negative impact.

Parents also reported improvements in the quality of their child's homework, with eight of 10 (79%) saying the computer has improved homework quality. Just 2% said that using the computer decreased the quality of their child's homework.

Half (52%) of parents in households with Internet access said that doing homework on a computer was "very effective" in preparing children for university, college or their careers. Another 43% said it was "somewhat effective."

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BUY A COMPUTER FOR YOUR HOME?

To teach my children/ educational purposes/ learning tool	57%
Business needs	46%
Entertainment/ hobby/ games	26%
Internet	22%
Word processing/ letter writing	13%
Get to know more about PCs	10%

Source: "Computers: A Positive Learning Tool?" Angus Reid Poll, Sept. 21, 1999.

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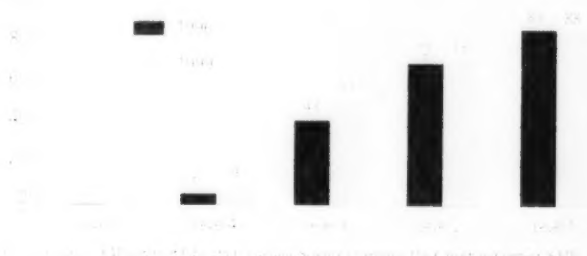

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www.studyweb.com
www.homeworkcentral.com
www.ala.org/ICONN/kidsconn.html
www.encyclopedia.com
www.encarta.msn.com

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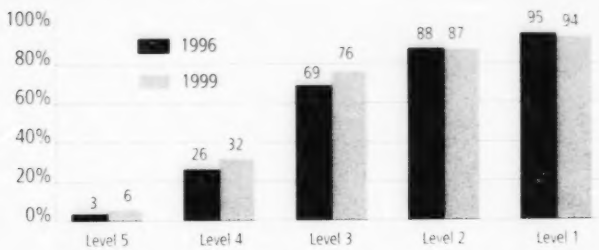

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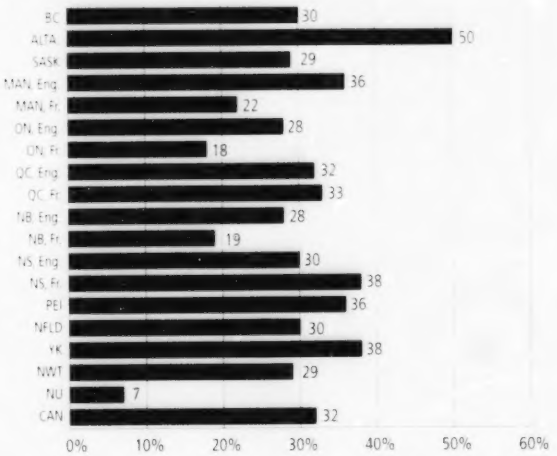

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Labour Force Profile of Youth

The labour force profile of youth refers to the nature and extent of youth involvement in the paid labour market.

Still Struggling: An Update on Teenagers at Work

Teens at work: a key transition

Entry into the labour market is a key transition from childhood to adulthood. The first job young teens usually get is part-time or summer employment. Yet working while still at school can be a very positive experience for teenagers.

Many Canadian youth have a problem finding a part-time or summer job to gain work experience and earn some income. While the situation improved somewhat between 1997 and 1999, the unemployment rate among youth aged 15 to 19 was almost three times the rate for adults. Fewer teenagers aged 15 to 19 are leaving school, and among those who drop out, the unemployment rate is improving. But many find only part-time work.

Progress has been tracking these trends and explores some of the implications. For comparison purposes, 1989 is used because it was the peak year for youth employment before the last recession, and 1997 was the trough.

Employment rates are low but rising

The employment rate for teenagers aged 15 to 19 – that is, the number of employed teens expressed as a percentage of the total population of that age group – shows modest improvement since 1997. In 1999, 41% of teens were employed, compared to 37% in 1997. However, there is still a major gulf between the 1999 employment rate for teens and the rate a decade earlier, when it stood at 52%. Since its low point in 1997, the teen employment rate has climbed only about one-quarter of the way back to what it was in 1989.

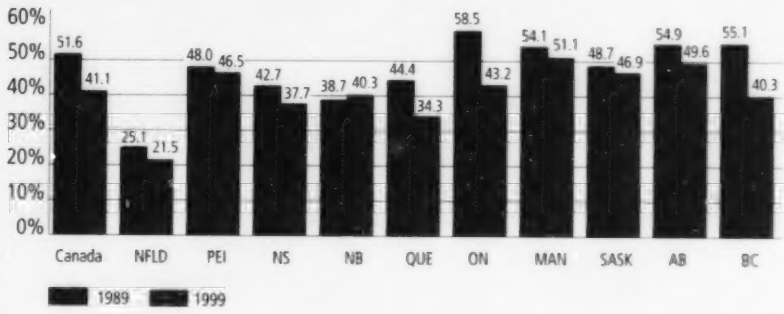
TEEN EMPLOYMENT RATES, 1989, 1997 & 1999

	1989	1997	1999
All Teens	51.6%	37.1%	41.1%
Boys	52.2%	37.3%	40.8%
Girls	51.0%	37.0%	41.5%
Summer jobs (July)	65.5%	44.2%	49.6%
Boys	67.6%	44.2%	49.8%
Girls	63.3%	44.2%	49.3%
Full-time students (December)	43.6%	30.2%	34.3%
Boys	42.1%	29.2%	32.3%
Girls	45.1%	31.2%	36.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, *1999.*

By contrast, the economic recovery for workers aged 25 to 54 began in 1993, and by 1999, the employment rate for this group had risen to slightly above its 1989 level. For young adults aged 20 to 24, the recovery began at the same time, but the employment rate in 1999 was still below its 1989 level – 74% compared to 68%. For teens, the recovery didn't even begin until 1997.

TEEN EMPLOMENT RATES, BY PROVINCE, 1989 & 1999



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, *1999.*

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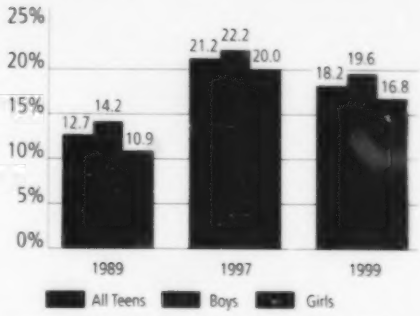

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, *1999.*

Very recent data show that 33% of teens aged 15 and 16 and 60% of those aged 17 to 19 found summer jobs in 2000. Compared to 1999, those rates are 2.6 and 1.8 percentage points higher, respectively, for those two age groups.

THE GENDER GAP IS CLOSING

For teenage girls, the employment market is improving. In 1999, the employment rate for girls was slightly higher than for boys, reversing the employment advantage that boys had in 1989. Girls are more likely than boys to hold a job during the school year (36.3% compared to 32.3%), and they are only slightly less likely to find a summer job (49.3% compared to 49.8%). The gender gap in summer employment that existed in 1989 has almost disappeared.

EMPLOYMENT VARIES BY PROVINCE

Teens have different employment experiences, depending on the province in which they live. In Ontario and B.C., there have been sharp declines in teen employment, whereas in Atlantic Canada and the Prairie provinces, the rates have remained relatively stable. The Quebec experience has been about average. These differences may reflect, in part, changes in social assistance programs that have resulted in more competition for entry-level jobs.

TEEN UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REMAIN HIGH

Like adults, young people are counted as unemployed if they are not working but are actively seeking work. In 1999, the unemployment rate for teens aged 15 to 19 was 18.2%, well up from the 1989 rate of 12.7%, but down modestly from 1997 when it was 21.2%. There is a higher unemployment rate for boys than for girls, but the gap has closed since 1989.

The difference in unemployment rates between teens and adults over age 25 has increased over time. While the teen unemployment rate was 1.9 times the adult rate at the end of the 1980s, it was 2.9 times the adult unemployment rate at the end of the century.

The unemployment rate among full-time students is still well above its 1989 level, but young people who are not in school are doing better in the job market. The rate for non-students has fallen below the 1989 level (16.7% compared to 17.6%). However, their overall employment situation has not improved.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR TEENS AND ADULTS, 1989, 1997 & 1999

	1989	1997	1999
Teens (aged 15-19)	12.7%	21.2%	18.2%
Adults (aged 25+)	6.7%	7.7%	6.3%
Ratio of teen unemployment rate to adult unemployment rate	1.9	2.8	2.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, *1999*.

TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL, 1989 & 1999

	Dec. 1989	Dec. 1999
% all teens not in school	20.7%	15.3%
% of these employed	69.3%	67.2%
Full-time/Part-time ratio	5.05	2.97

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, *1999*.

Fewer teens are leaving school

In December 1999, 310,000 teens (or 15.3%) were not in school, down from 20.7% (or 391,000 teens) in December 1989.

Of the teens not in school in December 1999, 67.2% were employed, down only slightly from the 69.3% recorded 10 years earlier, but many of those young people had only part-time work. The ratio of full-timers to part-timers was 3:1 in 1999 and 5:1 in 1989.

In December 1999, there were 60,000 teenagers who were neither in school nor working. The numbers and distribution between boys and girls in this very high-risk group were virtually unchanged from 1989.

Could low employment for teens be good news?

There are two possible explanations for the sharp difference in the employment picture between teens aged 15 to 19 and adults: teens could be having a harder time finding jobs, or they could have changed the way they relate to the job market. Both explanations are true to some degree.

First, teens generally seek relatively low-paying, low-skilled, entry-level jobs while they are attending school. However, the recession, combined with cuts to Employment Insurance, forced many middle-aged and older workers to accept those jobs. Young adults aged 20 to 24 were also ahead of teens in the job queue. Changes to social assistance in some provinces – including making young adults ineligible for benefits – may have heightened the competition for low-wage jobs. Lacking job skills and experience, teens have lost out and they are still losing out when competing for jobs.

Second, more teens are staying in school because they know that education is the key to getting a good job in this economy. Full-time students are slightly less likely to seek jobs than non-students.

It could be argued that having more young people stick with their studies and stay out of the job market is a positive thing. But is it? There is good evidence that working a moderate amount of time (less than 15 to 20 hours a week) while at school helps teens to flourish. A modest level of paid work is associated with better school performance and a lower drop-out rate. Working is also positively associated with broader social participation.

Working too many hours during the school year, however, can have negative effects on school performance. It is also possible that greater availability of jobs for teens could increase the drop-out rate, and thus lock some young people into dead-end career paths. However, given the sharp increase in the costs of post-secondary education, more jobs for teens could help more students to finance their education. In addition, whether graduating from high school, college or university, young people who have a combination of education and job skills are likely to find better jobs.

On balance, teens would be better off if jobs were easier to find, and they could make their own choices. ❍

Policy Initiatives for Children and Youth

Continuing public concerns about child poverty and healthy child development have prompted policy responses from both federal and provincial governments. *The Progress of Canada's Children* reports on some notable initiatives undertaken over the last few years, particularly those related to school-aged children.

Public Policies for School-Aged Children: A Patchwork

by Rianne Mahon

This article is based on a detailed study, School-aged Children across Canada: A Patchwork of Public Policies, *prepared for Canadian Policy Research Networks by Rianne Mahon (forthcoming).*

Governments play an important role – in partnership with others – in determining the quality of the environments in which school-aged children live. Families remain the critical "nest" for child development, but as children grow through the years from age 6 to 15, they are increasingly exposed to and influenced by the world beyond their homes.

The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) conducted a study of public policies for school-aged children to find out the answers to some interesting questions, including the following:

- How have governments responded to the problems facing school-aged children and their families?
- Is there a coherent "Canadian" policy for school-aged children?
- Has social policy renewal left out school-aged children?
- What are the major trends in policies for this age group?

A patchwork of policies

Many of the issues facing school-aged children and their families are not new, but rather old issues raised with renewed urgency: poverty and economic insecurity, literacy and education, linguistic and cultural diversity, and services for Aboriginal children. These issues have long been areas for government attention, but changes in families, labour markets, and government policies have fuelled the current concerns.

The CPRN study concludes that the federal and provincial governments cannot be said to have ignored school-aged children, but the challenges are substantial if governments are to live up to the promise in the National Children's Agenda of ensuring that *all* Canadian children "can fulfill their potential to be healthy, safe and secure, able to learn, socially engaged and responsible."

Current policies and programs go some way towards meeting the challenges of this age group, but they do so in quite varied ways and to different degrees. In fact, it makes little sense to speak of a "Canadian" policy for school-aged children. Rather, there is a patchwork of policies and programs reflecting the divergent courses charted by the federal and provincial governments.

After the early years

There has been a definite focus in social policy renewal on the early years of child development up to age 6. The preoccupation with the very young – which stems

from the assumption that this stage of child development represents an exceptional "window of opportunity" – is most visible in the fields of literacy and health. There is also an emphasis on older youth, focusing on the transition from school to work and the particular health issues with which teenagers must grapple, from drug and alcohol use to sexuality.

Has concern with the child stopped at the early years, only to pick up again as youth prepare to enter the adult world? This preoccupation with the early years and late adolescence is perhaps clearest in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba, but even here, children in the school years have not been ignored. While there have been cuts in education budgets, there has been a clear tendency to cut less deeply in this area than in others like recreation and culture, and considerable efforts have been devoted to curriculum reform.

School-aged children are included in certain health initiatives, notably in the fields of mental health, childhood diseases and special needs, and they tend to get the most support in provinces that have developed broad strategies for children. Saskatchewan has been a leader in this way. Its Action Plan for Children recognizes that the benefits of early intervention will be lost if children do not continue to get the supports they need as they mature.

Universal vs. targetted programs

The general trend in social policies away from universality and towards increased targetting can be seen in policies for school-aged children. This shift is exemplified in the National Child Benefit, which focuses on low-income families and in most provinces is specifically directed towards parents who are working, that is, those not on social assistance.

In recreation and culture, government funds are increasingly focused on children and youth who are "at risk." Quebec's $5 a day child care program and British Columbia's new child care program for school-aged children stand out as rare examples of new universal (or near universal) programs. Some provincial health-screening initiatives are also universal in that all children are assessed, and those who are "at risk" receive services and supports.

Prevention

There is a marked emphasis on prevention in policies for school-aged children. For example, the school system provides health and physical education information on lifestyle choices. Prevention is an important part of the rationale for public expenditures on sports and recreation programs, but universal programs like "Active Living" are notoriously underfunded.

In reforms to the child protection system, more emphasis is being placed on parenting practices to try to prevent harm to children. Such programs, however, are often oriented to parents of younger children. An inquiry into the fatal shooting at the high school in Taber, Alberta, found that too little support is being given to parents of school-aged children.

Prevention is also a theme in the area of juvenile justice, but here too, there are sharp differences in approach. In Ontario, the emphasis is on the imposition of strict measures for the offending individuals or their parents. In other provinces, like Quebec and British Columbia, the emphasis is on education and community action.

Integration

An important theme in federal and provincial policies for school-aged children is integration. There are efforts to bridge disciplinary, departmental and sectoral boundaries so that a more holistic and integrated approach to the healthy development of Canadian children can be developed. A study sponsored by Health Canada concluded that "the emerging issue is not a specific issue at all. What is emerging is a change in the ways in which

issues are addressed and increasingly understood, of the intersectoral efforts that will be required to effectively address the many factors that affect child and adolescent health." In other words, one of the key issues is how to bring the different specialists together to develop an integrated approach.

All provinces are engaged in efforts to "break down the silos," although in some provinces, these efforts are modest in scope. In Quebec and the Western provinces, particularly Saskatchewan and B.C., broad strategies focus on children and youth. Although Newfoundland's strategy focuses on social development in general, integrated programs for children and youth are being developed by the new Health and Community Services Boards.

AN HISTORIC BEGINNING

In the 1999/2000 edition of *Progress*, we reported on the National Children's Agenda, a federal/provincial/territorial initiative to develop coordinated programs and policies to improve child outcomes across the country. We also reported on the federal government's commitment to enter into an agreement with the provinces by December 2000.

On September 11, 2000 – two full months before the deadline – a federal/provincial/ territorial agreement was signed. The governments agreed that $2.2 billion would be allocated over the next five years for the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI). Funding will be used to invest in four areas:

- Promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy
- Improve parenting and family supports
- Strengthen early childhood development, learning and care
- Strengthen community supports.

Provinces are to tailor their programs and services to their own particular realities. The agreement stipulates that the provincial governments and territories will focus on any or all of the four areas. Within this framework, the agreement also talks of the Premiers' commitment to identify effective mechanisms to allow Canadians to participate in priority-setting. Moreover, a commitment was made to develop comparable indicators to track progress and report annually to Canadians.

While the agreement is historic and represents a commitment by all governments across the country to invest in children, a number of daunting challenges lie ahead if these new investments are to pay real dividends.

First, given that the agreement is vague on how the funds will be used, Canadians will want to know that governments across Canada are setting up appropriate mechanisms and processes to identify priorities and directions for investment. Governments will need to be reminded of their commitments to involve Canadians in this process.

A second challenge will be to ensure that there is clear public reporting and accountability, so that in five years' time, Canadians will know whether real progress has been made and we will benefit from what we have learned. Tracking and reporting are key if Canada is to truly improve the health and quality of life of children.

Finally, on the issue of funding, pressure must be sustained. There is no doubt that the agreement is a step in the right direction, but the funding is not sufficient to implement a truly comprehensive children's agenda for the 21st century. Children's issues do not end with the early years, and certainly the pressing needs of school-aged children and adolescents demand attention.

The governments of the country cannot be allowed to believe that children's issues have now been fully addressed and they can move on to something else.

One of the legitimate concerns about service integration is client confidentiality. To some extent, this issue is being addressed through the development of appropriate protocols.

GIVING A VOICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In some provinces, special efforts are being made to give youth a say in how they are cared for. This may not be appropriate for younger children, however, which is why B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have introduced children's advocates, and B.C. has also established a Children's Commission. Such bodies operate as a special ombudsman for children. To the extent that these advocates and commissioners are given powers to investigate the quality of services provided and to produce independent annual reports, they enhance the quality of the broader public debate on social policies for children.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

An area of particular concern is the provision of more effective services for Aboriginal children and youth. This concern is being felt across a range of policy areas, including education, health, child protection, and youth justice. The National Child Benefit treats First Nations band rights as equivalent to those of the provinces and territories, at least with regard to decisions about the benefit paid to social assistance recipients, that is, whether to deduct the federal contribution from their income or not.

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Each province is free to pursue the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy in its own manner. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C. have been the most active in trying to work out new ways of supporting Aboriginal children and youth that recognize the importance of their language, culture and communities.

In addition, policies for school-aged children increasingly acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity. To some extent, especially in the large urban centres like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, this has meant developing programs appropriate to an increasingly multicultural population.

Focus on community action

Another theme in public policies for school-aged children is the renewed emphasis on the local community as the best place to recognize the needs of children and their families and to mobilize community resources to meet those needs. Changes in the governance of schools provide an interesting example. In all provinces, school advisory councils have been established to give parents and neighbourhood communities a greater say. At the same time, many provinces have moved towards greater central control through funding arrangements and changes to the powers of school boards. New Brunswick went the furthest by abolishing local school boards, but protests have forced the provincial government to reconsider. Quebec seems to have worked out a set of arrangements that nicely balance the interests of families and neighbourhoods with those of the wider local community and the province.

While the focus on community action is sometimes used to support "downloading" of responsibilities by governments to communities, it can also be part of efforts to link the different levels of government. Clearly, local bodies need adequate resources to carry out their mandates, but there must also be institutional arrangements that help maintain an appropriate balance between local, provincial and national concerns.

The federal and provincial governments face substantial challenges if they are to live up to the promise of ensuring that all Canada's children can fulfill their potential. And while current policies and programs go some way towards meeting these challenges for school-aged children, they do so in quite varied ways and to different degrees. The resulting patchwork of policies and programs reflect the divergent courses charted by the federal and provincial governments.

But diversity in itself is not cause for concern. The problem arises when there are "holes" in the policy quilt, and these holes are most apparent where targetted approaches – focussing on the very young, adolescent youth, or those considered to be "at risk" – have become substitutes for truly inclusive policies. ❯

A Dramatic Step in B.C.

British Columbia has become the second Canadian province (after Quebec) to create a publicly funded child care system open to all families – rich, poor, and the large majority in between. This move marks a dramatic step toward a system providing affordable, licensed care to all families.

The program covers children from kindergarten through age 12 who attend licensed group out-of-school child care programs. B.C. estimates that the average family will save more than $1,000 per year, per child. The government says this initiative is the first step in a long-term commitment to make safe, affordable child care a fact of life in B.C.

Starting in January 2001, B.C. parents have access to licensed, before- and after-school care for children from Grade 1 up to age 12, at a cost of $7 a day. Parents of kindergarten children pay up to $14 per day per child (reflecting the higher cost of care for younger children). Parents do not need to apply for the program. If their local licensed group child care provider is participating in Child Care B.C., they automatically have access to the program. ❯

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TECHNICAL NOTE

The *Progress of Canada's Children* is based on a large database of information on children, youth and families in Canada. It is built on **environmental indicators**, which represent the developmental influences that affect child development, and **progress indicators**, which are general measures of how well our children and youth are faring.

A three-tiered model has been developed to organize the wealth of data the CCSD has assembled on selected environmental and progress indicators. **Simple indicators** constitute the first tier. They represent data that are measured over time against a base period to indicate the direction of change. Simple indicators are grouped under a number of **intermediate indicators**, the second tier. These indicators represent key determinants or outcomes of child well-being. The intermediate indicators are grouped into a third tier of **composite indicators** that assess both the environment of child development and children's progress through specific developmental periods.

Because of space limitations, *The Progress of Canada's Children* presents only a small portion of the research. The following chart outlines the model of composite and intermediate indicators that is used. Please contact the CCSD for further information.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

FAMILY LIFE

- family structure
- work and family
- family dynamics
- parental health
- parental education

ECONOMIC SECURITY

- level of income
- source of income
- distribution of income
- stability of income
- family expenditures

PHYSICAL SAFETY

- environmental hazards
- injuries
- crime and violence

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- education
- housing
- health
- child and family supports
- leisure and culture

CIVIC VITALITY

- affiliation
- participation
- expectations

PROGRESS INDICATORS BY AGE GROUP

HEALTH STATUS

- physical health
- socio-emotional health
- physical and social risks

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- family relationships
- peer relationships
- community relationships

LEARNING

- academic experiences and achievements
- non-academic skill development and leisure

LABOUR FORCE PROFILE OF YOUTH

- labour force activity
- earnings and income

Annual Update: Selected Indicators

The *Progress of Canada's Children* is based on a large database of information on children, youth and families. Our goal is to track these indicators over time to monitor the environments in which children live and grow and to see how well they are doing.

In the tables which follow, we present our update of indicators that are available on an annual basis. These data refer to changes between 1994 – our baseline year – and 1998, unless otherwise indicated.

Family Life

Distribution & Level of Income	Trend	Notes
Fertility rate	decreased	Refers to final 1997 data
Children living in 2-parent families	increased	
Children living in lone-parent families	increased	
Family size		
average family size	no change	
average 2-parent family size	no change	
average lone-parent family size	no change	
Youth (15-19 yrs) living with their families (%)	increased	
Young adults (20-24 yrs) living with their families (%)	increased	

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998 and *Annual Demographic Statistics*, 1999.

Work and Family

Due to the changeover in databases produced by Statistics Canada – the discontinuation of the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) – calculations for these categories are beyond the scope of this project. We will try to find other useful indicators for next year's *Progress* report.

Economic Security

Family Expenditures	Trend	Notes
Estimated cost of raising a child (up to age 18, Manitoba)	decreased	2000 data (calculated using 1999 income)

Source: Manitoba Agriculture. "The Cost of Raising a Child 2000," *in* Family Finance.

Stability of Income	Trend	Notes
National unemployment rate	decreased	
Families with children that experience a period of long-term unemployment (%)	decreased	
Canadians worrying about job loss		No new data available

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Labour Force Historical Review*, 1999 and *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998.

Distribution & Level of Income	Trend	Notes
Number of poor children	decreased	
Child poverty rate (%)	decreased	
among 2-parent families	decreased	
among lone-parent families	decreased	
Poverty gap of families with children	decreased	
Human Poverty Index (HPI-2)	11 out of 21	1999 data

DISTRIBUTION & LEVEL OF INCOME (CONT'D)	TREND	NOTES
Average after-tax family income: 2-parent families lone-parent families		Data not available at this time

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998; UNDP. *Human Development Report*, 2000.

SOURCES OF INCOME	TREND	NOTES
Children living in families which rely primarily on transfers (%)	decreased	
Children living in families which rely primarily on earnings (%)	increased	

Source: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998.

PHYSICAL SAFETY

CRIME & VIOLENCE	TREND	NOTES
Crime rate	decreased	down for the 8th consecutive year (does not include trafficking)
Violent crime rate	decreased	down for the 7th consecutive year
Homicide rate	decreased	

Source: Sylvain Tremblay. "Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999," in *Juristat*, Vol. 20, No. 5, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, 2000.

INJURIES	TREND	NOTES
Rate of injury-related death	decreased	Refers to 1997
Dwellings in need of major repair among households with children	increased	Refers to 1997
Gun-related deaths (0-24 yrs)	decreased	Refers to 1997

Sources: CHIRPP using Statistics Canada's Mortality Data Tables and Statistics Canada's *Survey of Household Spending*, 1998.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	TREND	NOTES
Commitment to reduce greenhouse gases (Grade rating)	C	Have failed to decrease emissions and no plans to meet Kyoto targets. The federal budget included new funding for energy-saving infrastructure for municipalities and increased funds for awareness building (Climate Action Fund). They have recommitted themselves and the provincial ministers to meet smog targets.
Commitment to review & reform pesticide policies (Grade rating)	D-	The Minister has not yet brought forward amendments to *The Pest Control Products Act*, but has promised to review the "special vulnerabilites and susceptibilities of children."

Source: Sierra Club of Canada. *Eighth Annual Rio Report Card, 2000.* <www.sierraclub.ca>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

CHILD CARE & CHILD WELFARE	TREND	NOTES
Licensed child care spaces	Number of child care spaces in most provinces has dropped or remained static.	
Average cost of child care ($ per month)		Data not presented in this format.
Government expenditures on child care	increased	• PEI, Manitoba and Alberta spent less on regulated child care in 1998 than in 1992. • Federal and provincial governments pledged to improve early childhood development through an accord worth up to $500 million annually.

CHILD CARE & CHILD WELFARE (CONT'D)	TREND	NOTES
Children in care of child welfare system:		Refers to 1999/2000 data.
British Columbia	N/A	Note: comparisons among provinces are not possible due to differences in data collection and definitions of children in care.
Alberta	increased	* includes 16- to 17-year-olds
Saskatchewan	increased*	** preliminary figures
Manitoba	increased**	
Quebec	N/A	
Ontario	increased	
New Brunswick	increased	
Nova Scotia	increased	
Prince Edward Island	N/A	
Newfoundland	N/A	
Northwest Territories	N/A	
Yukon	N/A	

Sources: CRRU. *Statistics Summary: Canadian Early Childhood Care and Education in the 1990s.* <http://www.childcarecanada.org/resources/CRRUpubs/factsheets/statsum3.html>; CCSD. Survey of Child Welfare Departments, Aug/Sept., 2000.

HOUSING	TREND	NOTES
Children (0-17 yrs) by family type and housing tenure:		
Lone-parent:		
Owned	decreased	
Not owned	increased	
Two-parent:		
Owned	decreased	
Not owned	increased	

Source: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1998.*

EDUCATION	TREND	NOTES
Enrollment in pre-school/ kindergarten programs	increased	
Enrollment in secondary school	decreased	
Full-time post-secondary enrollment	increased	
Proportion of population (25-64 yrs) with some college or university	NA	No new data available
Total expenditure on education as % of GDP (OECD)	decreased	
Proportion of students relying on loans	NA	No new data available
Average tuition	increased	

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Education in Canada*, 1999 and "Average Tuition Fees" in *The Daily*, August 28, 2000.

HEALTH RESOURCES	TREND	NOTES
Government expenditures on health services as % of GDP	increased	The 1998 data is a forecast.

Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information <http://www.cihi.ca/>

CIVIC VITALITY

EXPECTATIONS

Canadians who think these issues are important (%):	July 94	July 95	July 96	July 97	June 98	May/June 99*	August 2000*
Health care/ medicare	3	12	13	15	36	38	53
Unemployment/ jobs	33	34	44	49	30	25	14
Education	2	3	6	8	17	20	24
Taxes/ tax reform/ GST	3	5	4	6	7	14	14
The economy (general)	21	22	26	17	20	13	10
Deficit/ debt/ spending	18	28	23	17	15	12	10
Poverty/ hunger/ homelessness	1	8	6	7	7	10	11
National unity/ Quebec/ constitution	17	22	39	40	28	9	14

EXPECTATIONS (CONT'D)							
Canadians who think these issues are important (%):	July 94	July 95	July 96	July 97	June 98	May/June 99*	August 2000*
Environment	3	4	5	7	5	6	10
Crime/ justice issues	5	12	6	8	4	3	2

* The question asked in this survey was worded in a different manner.

Source: Angus Reid. *The Public Agenda*, July 11, 1998, and May-June survey, June 17, 1999. Federal Political Scene, August 30, 2000.

PARTICIPATION	TREND	NOTES
Voting rates	In general federal elections, voter turnout has been decreasing since 1989. In provincial general elections, only Saskatchewan and Yukon have shown increases in voter turnout.	
Number of charitable donors	decreased	The median donation in 1999 was $180, up from $173 in 1998.
Donations raised through the United Way ($)	increased	

Sources: Elections Canada website; Statistics Canada. "Charitable Donors, 1999" in *The Daily*, October 24, 2000; United Way of Canada, *1999 Campaign Results*.

HEALTH STATUS

PHYSICAL HEALTH, SOCIO-EMOTIONAL HEALTH & SOCIAL RISKS	TREND					NOTES
Age group:	0-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	
Infant mortality rate (<1)	NA					No new data available
Mortality rate	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No new data available
Injury death rate (per 100,000)	decreased	decreased	increased	decreased	decreased	Refers to 1997 data
Pregnancy rate				NA	NA	No new data available
Fertility rate				NA	NA	No new data available
Number of live births				NA	NA	No new data available
Number of therapeutic abortions				increased	increased	Refers to 1996 data
Incidence in sexually transmitted diseases:						
Chlamydia						
Female			decreased	decreased	decreased	
Male			decreased	decreased	increased	
Gonococcal infection						
Female			decreased	decreased	decreased	
Male			decreased	decreased	decreased	
Syphilis						
Female				decreased	decreased	
Male				decreased	decreased	

Note: No new data on immunizations are available.

Sources: Statistics Canada. *Annual Demographic Statistics, 1999*; CHIRPP using Statistics Canada's Mortality Data Tables; Personal communication with CIHI for therapeutic abortion statistics; Health Canada. *Canadian Sexually Transmitted Diseases Surveillance Report*, October 2000.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	TREND	NOTES
For youth aged 12 to 17:		
Youth crime rate	decreased	Refers to the charge rate
Violent crime rate (per 100,000)	decreased	
Increase/decrease in youth violent crime rate from 1994	decreased by 6%	
Youth homicide rate (per 100,000)	No change	

Source: Sylvain Tremblay. "Canadian Crime Statistics 1999" in *Juristat*, Vol 20, No. 5, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, 2000.

Family Relationships	*Trend*		*Notes*
Age groups:	6-11 yrs	12-17 yrs	
Missing children/ runaways	N/A	N/A	Data not released by age groups.

Source: RCMP. *Missing Children's Registry, 2000.*

Learning

Academic Experiences and Achievements	*Trend*		*Notes*
Age groups:	16-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	
Enrollment in school full-time (%)	decreased	increased	
High school completion (%)	increased*	increased	*refers to 15-19 yrs
Educational attainment (%)			
Less than 8 years		no change	
9-10 years		decreased	
11-13 years, non-graduate		no change	
11-13 years, graduate		decreased	
Some post-secondary		increased	
Post-secondary certificate or diploma		increased	
University degree		increased	

Source: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998.

Labour Force Profile

Income	*Trend*		*Notes*
Age groups:	16-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	
Average earnings:			
Men	increased	increased	
Women	increased	increased	
Average income:			
Men	increased	increased	
Women	increased	decreased	

Source: Statistics Canada. *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998.

Labour Force Activity	*Trend*		*Notes*
Age groups:	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	
Labour force participation rate	increased	increased	1999 data
Labour force participation rate of women	increased	increased	1999 data
Labour force participation rate of men	increased	increased	1999 data
Teens/ young adults employed (%)			
Students	decreased*	decreased	*Applies to 16- to 19-year-olds
Non-students	decreased*	increased	
Employed part-time (%)	decreased*	decreased	*Applies to 16- to 19-year-olds
Unemployment rate (%)	decreased	decreased	1999 data
Youth not in school, not in workforce (%)	increased*	decreased	*Applies to 16- to 19-year-olds

Sources: Statistics Canada. *The Labour Force Historical Survey 1999* and *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*, 1998.

DATA SOURCES

The primary data for *The Progress of Canada's Children 2001* has been calculated by researchers at the Canadian Council on Social Development using information from the Statistics Canada surveys listed below. Additional data sources follow and they are listed according to the section of *Progress* in which they were used. Sources for the charts are provided with each chart. For more information about the data used in *The Progress of Canada's Children 2001*, please contact the CCSD.

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES:

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), developed by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, collects information on over 20,000 children (newborns to 13 years of age). Starting in 1994, the NLSCY will survey these children every two years until they reach adulthood. In the first cycle of the survey, both the child's primary caregiver and teacher were asked to provide information, as were children aged 10 and 11. In the second cycle of the survey in 1996, children aged 12 and 13 were also included. The NLSCY includes a broad range of family, household, and community characteristics affecting child development. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1994 and 1996 surveys.

National Population Health Survey (NPHS)

The National Population Health Survey (NPHS), conducted by Statistics Canada, collects information related to the health of the Canadian population. A cross-section of information is obtained by surveying all members of the survey households (58,000 individuals). To collect longitudinal information, one respondent per household, aged 12 years and older, is surveyed (18,000 individuals). Data will be collected every two years, starting in 1994.

Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF)

This survey is no longer conducted by Statistics Canada. The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics is meant to replace the SCF.

Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)

Started in 1993, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) is an ongoing longitudinal survey that interviews each sample member over a six-year period. The longitudinal nature of this survey as well as its extensive data content allows analysis of issues related to the labour market and income, including low income and changes in income over time.

1996 Census

Statistics Canada's 1996 Census provides national coverage of the entire Canadian population, including variables on demographic, social, cultural, labour force and income data, as well as details on dwellings, households and families. Generally, data are presented for Canada, the provinces, terrritories and for Census Metropolitan Areas. Some tables include comparisons with data from earlier Censuses.

National Graduate Survey

This Statistics Canada survey, sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada, provides information on the integration of recent graduates into the labour market. Data are collected on such things as jobs obtained since graduation (number, type and duration of jobs), the length of the job search, the relationship between the students' education or training and the jobs obtained, and any additional studies or training since graduation. Surveys were conducted in 1978, 1984, 1988, 1992, and 1997 for students who had graduated two years earlier. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1992 and 1997 surveys.

Survey of Household Spending

The Survey of Household Spending offers information about spending on a wide variety of goods and services, as well as data on dwelling characteristics and household ownership of equipment. The survey collects information on household and family expenditures for food, shelter, communications, child care, furniture, clothing, health care, transportation, recreation, reading materials, education, tobacco and alcohol, gambling, taxes, insurance premiums, pension contributions, money gifts, and charitable contributions. It also collects information on type of dwelling, whether repairs are needed, tenure (owned or rented), year of move, period of construction, number of rooms and bathrooms, and the age and type of heating equipment and fuel used. Information on household equipment includes household appliances, communications and entertainment equipment, and the number of vehicles owned. This survey replaces HFE and FAMEX. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1998 survey.

General Social Survey (GSS)

Objectives of the GSS surveys are to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions and well-being of Canadians, and to provide information on specific social policy issues of current or emerging interest. The GSS is a continuing program, with a survey cycle each year. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1998 GSS, Cycle 12, which focuses on the time use of Canadians.

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Project Staff

Louise Hanvey, Project Director/Writer
Marcel Lauzière, CCSD Executive Director
Andrew Jackson, Director of Research
Laura Buckland, Research Assistant
Angela Gibson-Kierstead, Research Associate
Anne Milan, Research Associate (Statistics Canada)
Paul Roberts, Senior Research Associate
Sylvain Schetagne, Senior Research Associate
Katherine Scott, Senior Research & Policy Associate
Peter J. Smith, Research Associate
Spyridoula Tsoukalas, Research Associate
Cheryl Hamilton, Editor
Nancy Colborne Perkins, Production Coordinator
John Kane, Contributing Writer/Researcher
Arlette Sinquin, Translator

Thanks also to the rest of the staff of the CCSD, all of whom make a valuable contribution to this project.

Advisors

Peter Dudding, Child Welfare League of Canada
Nathan Gilbert, Laidlaw Foundation
Robert Glossop, Vanier Institute of the Family
Michel Vallée, National Crime Prevention Centre
Mary Johnston, Childhood & Youth Division, Health Canada
Sylvie Michaud, Special Surveys Division, Statistics Canada
Dan Offord, Chedoke McMaster Hospitals
Dawn Walker, Canadian Institute of Child Health
Allen Zeesman, Income Security & Social Development Studies
Human Resources Development Canada

Photo credits

Thanks to the following people for their photographic contributions to ***The Progress of Canada's Children 2001***: Rebecca Albert, Paul Alink, Anne Allard, Annette & Warren Barrow, Cynthia Benjamin, Leslie Cotnam, Nathalie Coutou, Diane Dufour, Gail Fawcett, Tina Georgantopoulos, Angela Gibson-Kierstead, Rachel Green, Henry Gzik, Louise Hanvey, Neil & Tracy Harper, Rebecca Kong, Guylène Laforce, Jennifer Lanzon, Marcel Lauzière, Anne Milan, Linda Niksic, Esther Roberts, David Ross, Susan Scruton, Kathleen Semanyk, Arlette Sinquin, Caroline Stark, Debbie Vanderburgh, and Janna Werry.

THE PROGRESS OF CANADA'S CHILDREN 2001

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is one of Canada's most authoritative voices promoting better social and economic security for all Canadians. A national, self-supporting organization, the CCSD's main product is information and its main activity is research, focusing on concerns such as child well-being, economic security, employment, poverty and government social policies.

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The CCSD gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the **Laidlaw Foundation**, **Health Canada**, the **National Crime Prevention Centre**, and **TD Securities** in producing *The Progress of Canada's Children 2001*.

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Please contact:
Canadian Council on Social Development
Publications
309 Cooper Street, 5th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G5
Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750
E-mail: publications@ccsd.ca
Internet: www.ccsd.ca

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